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Mid-term Evaluation

USAID Famine Early Warning System (FEWS III)

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By **Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc
In joint venture with
Louis Berger International, Inc**

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Table of Acronyms

		<u>Where Used*</u>
AFR	Africa Bureau	USAID
AGRHMET	Agronomy Hydrology Meteorology	Sahel
AGRITEX	Agriculture Extension Service	Zimbabwe
ARC	AGRHMET Regional Center	Sahel
ARD	Associates in Rural Development Inc	
AFFR	Assistant FEWS Field Representative	
CCD	Cold Cloud Duration	
CFFR	Country FEWS Field Representative	
CILSS	Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel	
CIS	Consolidated Information System	Mozambique
CPC	Climate Prediction Center NOAA	
CSA	Commission of Food Security	Mauritania
CTE	Early Warning System	Burkina Faso
CWFS	Committee on World Food Security	
DIAPER	Drought Monitoring System	Sahel
DMC	Drought Monitoring Center	Kenya
DNAMR	National Directorate of Rural Populations	Mali
DNAER	National Directorate of Equipment	Mali
DNSI	National Statistics Office	Mali
DPPC	Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Commission	Ethiopia
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire)	
ENSO	El Niño Southern Oscillation	
EPA	Extension Planning Area	Malawi
EROS	Earth Resources Observation Systems Data Center USGS	
ESA	European Space Agency	
ESAMI	Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute	
EU	European Union	
EW	Early Warning	
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	
FEAU	Food Economy Analysis Unit (WFP/SCF UK)	Sudan
FEWS	Famine Early Warning System Project	
FFP	Food for Peace USAID	
PHANIS	Food Health and Nutrition Information System	Zambia
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems	
FSTAU	Food Security Technical And Administrative Unit	Southern Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
GHA	Greater Horn of Africa	
GHAJ	Greater Horn of Africa Initiative	
GIS	Geographic Information System	
GPS	Global Positioning Satellite	
GTP/A	Multi disciplinary Technical Working Group	Sahel
GTS	Global Telecommunications System	
IDEA	Investment in Developing Export Agriculture	Uganda
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute	
IGAD	Inter Governmental Authority on Development	Horn of Africa
ISTI	International Science and Technology Institute Inc	
ITCZ	Inter tropical Convergence Zone	
KMD	Kenya Meteorological Department	Kenya
LFSU	Local Food Security Unit (EC)	Ethiopia
LWF	Lutheran World Federation	
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	Mozambique
MAI	Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation	Zambia
MDRE	National Directorate for Rural Development and Environment	Mauritania
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières	
MT	Metric Tons	
NAC	National AGRHMET Center	Sahel
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	
NCEP	National Center for Environmental Prediction	
NDVI	Normalized Difference Vegetative Index	
NEWFIS	National Early Warning and Food Information System	Uganda
NEWS	National Early Warning System	Malawi
NEWU	National Early Warning Unit	
NMS	National Meteorological Survey	Mali

NMSA	National Meteorological Services Agency	Ethiopia
NOAA	National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration	
OALS	Office of Arid Lands Studies Univ of Arizona	
ODI	Overseas Development Institute UK	
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance USAID	
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan	
OPM	Oxford Policy Management Group	
PAM	Program Against Malnutrition	Zambia
PD&S	Project Design and Support	USAID
PP	Project Paper	USAID
PRMC	Donor Coordination Group	Mali
RC	Regional Coordinator	
REDSO/EA	Regional Economic Development Services Office East Africa	
RFE	Rainfall Estimates	
RFFR	Regional FEWS Field Representative	
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal	
SABC	Somalia Aid Coordinating Body	
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community	
SAF	Social Action Fund	World Bank
SAP	Early Warning System	Sahelian countries
SD	Sustainable Development	USAID
SIAR	Systemed Information d Alerte Rapide	Rwanda
SIM	National Market Information System	Mali
SISSAR	Food Security Information System	Mauritania
SNAP	National Early Warning System	Mozambique
SNS	National Security Stock	Mali
SPLA	Southern Peoples Liberation Army	Sudan
SRRA	Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association	
TA	Technical Assistance	
UNDMT	United Nations Disaster Management Team	Uganda
URL	Internet web address	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture	
USG	United States Government	
USGS	United States Geological Survey	
VA	Vulnerability Assessment	
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Division WFP	
WFP	World Food Program	

*If blank denotes general usage

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This is the mid-term evaluation of the USAID-financed Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) Project, Phase III, conducted in June and July, 1998 by a six-person contract team in visits to 13 overseas FEWS posts and in interviews with USAID and FEWS U S -based staff

The terms of reference, prepared by the United States Agency for International Development, Bureau for Africa, Office of Sustainable Development (USAID/AFR/SD), called for the Team to look at FEWS performance during the 1994-98 period in carrying out early warning (EW) and vulnerability assessment (VA) activities in food insecure African countries and also in promoting improved response planning by these governments and other agents involved in the famine, drought, food insecurity nexus in Africa. The Scope of Work included a special emphasis upon the ways FEWS had increased capacity building in all facets of its work

FEWS III is implemented by Associates in Rural Development (ARD) with assistance from the International Science and Technology Institute (ISTI) and the Office of Arid Lands Studies (OALS) of the University of Arizona and in conjunction with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). It is designed to provide “ decision-makers in USAID Washington, USAID Missions and host countries [with] information related to the identification of specific famine threats and to assist them in planning appropriate, effective and timely responses ” It is supervised by a management team in USAID/AFR/SD who are responsible for assuring that the project remains in conformance with AFR/SD’s Strategic Objective No. 10 – ‘improving policies strategies and programs for preventing, mitigating and transiting out of crisis’ and, in particular, Intermediate Result No. 3 – ‘improving famine prevention, drought preparedness and adoption of response plans ’

FEWS III is based on work accomplished under the earlier FEWS I and FEWS II projects. It has remained to a large extent what they were – a data systems, analysis and reporting entity. What makes FEWS III different from its predecessors has been its significantly stronger emphasis on i) capacity building, ii) the institutional strengthening of national and sub-national organizations responsible for combating the causes of food insecurity and famine, iii) the role of its regional field offices in attempting to strengthen the food security-related operations of regional African organizations, and iv) the increased use of market information

FEWS maintains offices in fourteen African countries with FEWS field staff covering Somalia and Southern Sudan located in the REDSO/EA offices in Nairobi. Its regional offices are in Bamako, Harare, Nairobi and Kampala. It has a headquarters staff in Arlington, Virginia of 11 officers and a total professional field staff of 24. Its operations during the 1994-98 period are extensively reported on in the quarterly progress reports prepared by all FEWS field and headquarters units and submitted to AFR/SD. The raw materials upon which the findings, judgments, conclusions and recommendations of this report are premised stem from these reports

and from i) reporting done for USAID's R4 exercise, ii) all FEWS *Bulletins* and Special Reports prepared during the period, iii) a representative sample of Monthly Country Reports, iv) several baseline and current vulnerability assessments, v) FEWS handbooks and manuals and, vi) above all, interviews with more than **300** users of FEWS products, colleagues of FEWS field agents, USAID staff, Embassy personnel, other donor representatives, NGO officers and officials of all involved governments as well as officers of FEWS' cooperating partners – USGS, NOAA and NASA – and virtually every FEWS staff member

This Report is comprised of a short introduction and background section followed by description and discussion of FEWS as a whole (the 'system') and the constituent parts of its functional responsibilities early warning, vulnerability assessment, and response planning. Evaluative comments follow the description and discussion sections for each of these functions. The next section is a statement of conclusions derived from the preceding discussion and evaluative commentary. The final section contains recommendations and discussion on the remaining lifetime of FEWS III plus commentary and recommendations for the time period beyond FEWS III, as called for in the Terms of Reference.

There are **nine** principal conclusions in this Evaluation. They represent, in some cases amalgamations of a much larger set of the Evaluation Team's initial conclusions (there were thirty, originally). They are:

1 FEWS III is doing well what USAID has asked of it. This is the Evaluation Team's principal, overall finding. It is based on i) the Team's review of FEWS' primary objectives and of its strategy in satisfying these objectives under difficult circumstances in many countries, ii) the views of the overwhelming majority of those outside FEWS asked by the Team to comment on FEWS' usefulness to them, and iii) the Team's judgment regarding the common-sense, flexible approaches employed by FEWS in specific country situations. The Team concludes that FEWS has performed extremely well in delivering its bottom line product – informing USAID, host governments, donors and NGOs of developments signaling famine and factors engendering deepening food insecurity.

2 FEWS' reporting is the best available. There are a number of organizations – ranging from the global perspective of FAO/GIEWS to the community-specific, food insecurity reporting of Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) and Save the Children Foundation/UK (SCF/UK) – who gather data and information and prepare EW and VA reports. Without a single exception, all users of such reporting, even those working for these other report-preparing entities, had high praise for FEWS' *Bulletin*, Special Reports and the country-specific FEWS reporting available to them. FEWS' reporting is found to be timely and is universally regarded by all these organizations as the most credible of all such reporting and of inestimable value to them in their own work.

3 The quality of FEWS' staff is uniformly high, as is motivation. FEWS has attracted and retained motivated, dedicated professionals of high competence in both its field and headquarters staffs. A large majority of its country-based field representatives are citizens of the country where they work. This is a major change from FEWS I and II and represents a significant step in FEWS' capacity building efforts. Their workloads are extremely heavy, and they expressed some

unhappiness over the enormous amount of time required to produce their monthly Country Reports (especially when so much contained in these reports does not make it into the FEWS *Bulletin*), but these field staff nonetheless evidence high enthusiasm and uniformly high competence. Their production, under very difficult circumstances, is prodigious.

4 The context in which FEWS field operations are conducted seems to be worsening For a variety of reasons, the quality of host government agencies on which FEWS field staff depend for primary data collection is worsening in most countries. National EW units are beset with high staff turnover, non-existent budgets, lack of transport, inadequate computers, non-attractive emoluments and steadily declining morale. In one or two countries these units are so impaired as to have ceased to function effectively. Other countries seem headed in the same direction. The primary causes are low government priority, a lack of budgetary resources for these activities caused, in some countries, by the phasing out of FAO and other donor financing which has been supporting several of these EW units for many years.

5 FEWS-type activities must continue beyond 1999 This conclusion supports recommendations in the final section of the paper. USAID's need for information gathering and reporting, which caused FEWS to be created in the first place, is not diminished. The U.S. and other food donors still require i) credible and timely reporting on signals of impending drought or other famine creating trends, ii) information on changes in the level of vulnerability of at-risk populations, iii) analysis of host government, NGO and other donor emergency response capabilities, iv) analysis of transport, human conflict situations, policy and socio-economic factors constraining the quantity and timing of food and related assistance commodities. There is no other organization presently capable of taking over the task of producing the needed reporting. The situations being reported on – particularly as they relate to increasing, not decreasing, vulnerability to severe food insecurity – may indeed be worse in the late 1990s than in the mid-1980s. With declining capabilities in many of these governments to collect and analyze data on the indicators signaling changes in the causality of food insecurity and famine, there seems no viable alternative to continuing FEWS-type activities beyond 1999.

6 Changes in the level of field staffing are required FEWS country offices with only one professional staff person are hard pressed to accomplish all the tasks required of them. Administrative duties, particularly in countries where there is no USAID office to offer assistance, require a large share of the time of the FEWS representative in single-person posts. The Team concludes that FEWS country posts must have at least two professionals. This is becoming more so with the trend of fewer USAID missions and continued weakening of host government early warning units (EWUs) creating the need for even greater FEWS efforts to verify government-collected data in some countries.

7 Capacity-building efforts have faced problems This has been particularly true in moving beyond technical capacity enhancement and into the realm of unproved *utilization* of information by policy-level personnel and decision-makers. While FEWS has been exemplary in its efforts to train its own professional field staff and technicians in the host governments and NGO communities who work with this staff, much of this capacity building has been in developing skills in using the tools of the business – computer software training, GIS map/data manipulation, rapid appraisal techniques, and database management. Decision-makers – the users

of the reporting in host countries – have not been targeted for capacity enhancement nearly enough. Further, a large number of the technical people who have received technical assistance and training have left the posts for which they received FEWS training, creating a continuing need to repeat training for new staff. The Evaluation Team concludes another approach to this problem is required, which is discussed in the Recommendations Section.

8 Improved response planning has not occurred at the desired rate. As best the Team could determine, FEWS has had only modest success in most countries in generating more and better response planning. While there are a large number of ‘output level’ successes – and many of these are discussed in this Report – the Team is aware of only two cases of significant, purpose-level successes: i) the southern African response to the threat of the El Niño event of 1997/98 and ii) the decision by USAID/Ethiopia to finance a bilateral project to improve the response planning capabilities of Ethiopia’s Drought Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC). Part of the reason for so few substantial successes is that many FEWS field staff **do** not interact sufficiently with senior government decision-makers and policy-level staffs. FEWS field staff have traditionally interacted most effectively with their technical counterparts. This is not the appropriate audience for a successful response planning effort.

9 Additional thinking is needed on the multiple roles of the regional field representatives. The three premier regional organizations which relate to FEWS’ objectives are **SADC** in southern Africa, **AGRHYMET** in the Sahel and **IGAD** in the Greater Horn of Africa. FEWS is dealing effectively, i.e. in ways which generate *sustainable institutional growth* primarily in one of these – SADC. More attention must be focused on strengthening the capacity **of** these organizations to be ‘full service’ food security support organizations, particularly in their becoming repositories of the kind of training needed by their member governments (and NGOs communities) for sustainable capacity building. In addition, particularly in West Africa, more regional coverage is needed outside the five Sahelian states where FEWS offices are presently located.

Recommendations

There are five Recommendations dealing with a FEWS follow-on activity (i.e. after 1999), and four relating to the remaining one-and-a-half years of FEWS III.

Long-term recommendations for a FEWS follow-on

1 FEWS-type operations must be sustained beyond 1999. This follows from Conclusion No. 5. The need for FEWS’ reporting is likely to be, for the foreseeable future, even greater than in the past. While some argue that this is a failing of FEWS III, the Team thoroughly disagrees with this view. The reasons for the failure in developing sustainable locally-based and financed capacities to undertake the data and information gathering, analysis and reporting responsibilities which FEWS discharges lie well beyond FEWS’ span of control. This is the Team’s primary recommendation, made with full appreciation of the likelihood of continued USAID budget stringency. So long as the people and government of the United States continue to desire to respond to the plight of populations facing threats of severe malnourishment and famine, the

financial costs of *not* supporting a FEWS-like activity beyond 1999 will almost assuredly be substantially greater than those associated with the cost of the follow-on herein recommended. The best possible information made available at the earliest possible moment is as sure a cost-cutting strategy as can be envisioned within present and projected conditions in drought-prone Sub-Saharan Africa. Such highly credible and timely information to guide preparedness, mitigation, response **and** rehabilitation – by all donors, governments **and** NGOs can not be assured without the continuation of a FEWS-like activity.

2 The configuration of FEWS field presence must change in a follow-on activity Not only must the minimum country configuration be two professionals, they must be prepared to increase their exposure to policy-level issues and decision-makers in host governments. Improved effectiveness in interacting with senior decision-makers is likely to come as a consequence of more experience (as has occurred with a few of the present FEWS country representatives), but will also require changes in the type of training and in the terms of reference for these field staff. The FEWS regional offices will have to focus more exclusively on building sustainable training *institutions* in their regions, enhancing the capacity of AGRHYMET, IGAD (or ESAMI) and further enhancing SADC to offer in-service training in many of the disciplines where FEWS has in the past offered ad hoc workshops. In a FEWS follow-on activity, the emphasis should be in building continuing regional food security-related training capacities and on helping these regional organizations to sensitize decision-makers in member governments to the importance of good food security-related data gathering and analysis.

3 The use of the vulnerability analysis as a tool for program and project targeting and analysis must be expanded The Evaluation Team was surprised and impressed by the impact of the Malawi VAM on project targeting decisions taken by the government, donors (including the World Bank), and NGOs. FEWS should press governments, donors and NGOs elsewhere to use VA results as a means not only of targeting programs and projects in the more food insecure areas of these countries but also as a tool for measuring impact.

4 Future vulnerability assessment analysis must be valid at the sub-district administrative level This recommendation follows from No. 3 above. This requires increased decentralization of data collection and a focus on the sub-district, **as** opposed to the district, as the unit of attention. Data valid at the district level are still too crude to be used effectively for targeting development strategies, programs and projects on *communities* at great risk or highly vulnerable to livelihood insecurity and resultant food insecurity. There are important financial and human resource issues relating to this conclusion.

5 The financing of a FEWS follow-on should be internationalized FEWS provides a service to all donors in the countries in which it operates. Without exception, the Evaluation Team found donor representatives highly complimentary in describing **the** utility of the various FEWS reports to their own programs. These donors – including the international donors – should be asked to help cover the costs of future FEWS operations.

Near-term recommendations for FEWS III are

- 1 The second Regional FEWS Representative in the Sahel should be posted to Niamey to work as closely as possible with AGRHYMET Based on where overall capacity-building and institutional strengthening needs to evolve in the region and in the governments of the region, AGRHYMET needs to be strengthened in its capacity to offer capacity building and institutional strengthening services to its member states. The Team recommends that a FEWS regional representative be located in AGRHYMET to help to speed this process **as** guided **by** the FEWS/AGRHYMET jointly-developed portion of his/her terms of reference.
- 2 FEWS and USAID need to determine the official status of FEWS representatives and FEWS physical assets, country-by-country Too much administrative time **of** the AFFRs and CFFRs is spent on matters that need to be resolved by agreement with local governments on the official status of FEWS in their country. The Report describes the example of the 4-wheel drive vehicle which has been in limbo in Gibraltar for a year pending a resolution of who pays the import duties. Such problems divert FEWS field staff too much and too often.
- 3 The content of the monthly country reporting should be made available to more users The Evaluation Team was struck by how much useful information contained in these reports does not make it into the *Bulletin* and does not become **part** of a database of country food security-related information available to donors, NGOs and other professionals dealing with food insecurity issues in these countries. The Team recommends that a much greater share of the content of the monthly reports be made available to a wider audience.
- 4 The Vulnerability assessments should be posted on the FEWS website The VAs are incredibly useful and should be available to a much wider audience. Posting vulnerability assessments on the FEWS website in a format allowing users to download data, graphics and maps for their own use is strongly recommended.

Section II.

Background and Introduction

A Background

This is the mid-term evaluation of the USAID-financed Famine Early Warning System (FEWS 111). The Office of Sustainable Development in USAID's Africa Bureau has contracted with Checchi and Company and Louis Berger International (Contractors) to undertake this evaluation in accordance with terms of reference (TOR) contained in the USAID/W-Checchi/Louis Berger contract document.

In accord with these TOR, the Contractors fielded a team of six consultants (see Annex F for the composition of the evaluation team) operating as three teams of two persons. Altogether, these sub-teams visited 13 of the 16 Sub-Saharan African countries where FEWS is active (and 13 of the 14 where there are FEWS field offices), including regional FEWS offices in Bamako, Nairobi, Kampala and Harare. Prior to these field visits, members of the Team were briefed by the FEWS Director and staff in Arlington, Virginia and interviewed FEWS/W, USAID/W, World Bank staffs and other users of FEWS' output in the Washington area. In addition, members of the Team met with officials of Associates in Rural Development (ARD – the prime contractor), NASA and NOAA and with officials of USGS in Sioux Falls, SD. These three agencies provide supporting services within FEWS to the principal contractor, Associates in Rural Development (ARD), of Burlington, VT. Finally, the Team was in e-mail contact with several individuals in other parts of the world engaged in research in food and nutrition security to ascertain other outside perspectives on the use and utility of FEWS' various outputs.

The field research involved visits of 3-5 working days in each of the following African countries:

Sahel

Chad

Mali

Mauritania

Niger

(the Burluna Faso CFFR was interviewed in Niamey, Niger)

The Greater Horn of Africa

Ethiopia

Kenya

Rwanda

Tanzania

Uganda

(meetings in Nairobi, Kenya covered operations in Southern Sudan and Somalia)

Southern Africa

Malawi

Mozambique

Zambia

Zimbabwe

SADC

(meetings in Harare also covered FEWS operations in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland in the SADC region)

In addition, meetings were held with the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Food Security Division, and the Global Information and Early Warning System (FAO/GIEWS) and with the World Food Program's (WFP) Office of Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM) in Rome on June 29, 1998

The African field visits were undertaken during the period June 5 through June 26. Members of the Team met with country and regional FEWS officers, USAID staff, host country officials, representatives of some of the multilateral and bilateral donor organizations, staff of selected international and local NGOs and representatives from a varied mix of private entities. Interviews focused on a) the history of the FEWS operation in that country/region, b) the present level of output of FEWS products for in-country and extra-country users, c) the role of FEWS within and/or outside the local government administrative structure, d) the timeliness, accuracy and utility of the various FEWS products (as they relate to early warning, vulnerability, capacity building, response planning and overall institutional development) to USAID, host government, other donor, NGO and private users, and e) issues, problems, and progress in early warning, vulnerability assessment, response planning and capacity development.

Subsequent to the African field visits, the Team reassembled in Washington to discuss the more important aspects of their respective country visits and to reach Team consensus on draft 'conclusions' and recommendations. The draft evaluation report was drafted, circulated to team members and redrafted prior to its submission to USAID/AFR/SD for preliminary review and comment on July 21, 1998. The Report was orally presented on July 24, 1998 in a series of meetings in USAID/W and subsequent commentary, provided by AFR/SD/CMR and based on comments from USAID field missions on the draft report, was incorporated into the Final Report submitted on August 21, 1998.

B Introduction

FEWS III is designed to provide "decision-makers in USAID Washington, USAID Missions and host countries [with] information related to the identification of specific famine threats and to assist them in planning appropriate, effective and timely responses." The approach employed by FEWS III staff is a modified version of the methodology developed initially under the FEWS I program as substantially expanded under FEWS II. To understand the goal, objectives, and strategic and tactical dimensions of the latest incarnation of FEWS, it is necessary to portray, briefly, the outline and dynamics of the earlier projects.

1 FEWS I

FEWS I (USAID Project No 698-0491) was developed by USAID in the midst of the severe drought and famine conditions of the mid-1980s in the Sahel. It was an emergency early warning (EW) activity in which US AID-funded field personnel in drought-affected Sahelian countries were to gather as much data as possible on food stocks, food production, food aid in process, and information about groups severely affected and to relay that information with urgency to USAID's Africa Bureau, the Office of Food for Peace (FFP) and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). It ~~was~~ established because information needed to determine the levels, timing and targeting of US PL 480 emergency food and related assistance to affected populations ~~was~~ often late and inadequate. As a result, the likelihood of a poorly focused and costly food assistance response ~~was~~ increased.

In Washington, FEWS I field data were reviewed in the context of satellite imagery to determine the geographic dimensions of the problem, estimates of numbers of people affected and the amount of emergency food and supporting assistance required. FEWS I was an information gathering and analysis, rapid response activity in which field officers operated, for the most part as gatherers and transmitters of information to Washington. It was, in effect, a one-way transmission medium -- providing sufficient, timely and credible information to US decision-makers" with little of this information intended for use by host governments, other donors, the NGO community or other non-USG users. It was decided at the time FEWS I was authorized that it would not engage in capacity-building of African counterparts.

2 FEWS II

Launched in September, 1988, FEWS II extended the geographic scope of the FEWS project to encompass Sudan and Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa. In addition, FEWS efforts were broadened to gather data and provide analysis of both 'risk assessment' and 'vulnerability assessment,' looking not only at issues of inadequate availability of food, but of inadequate access to food by vulnerable households. 'Risk assessment' in this context was viewed as analysis of the likelihood, magnitude and duration of an emergency situation or event (often referred to as a 'shock'). In the countries covered under FEWS II, this was most likely to be severe drought, but could also include such natural events as floods, insect infestations (locusts, army worms, etc) and/or human-caused shocks such as warfare or similar conflict interrupting the production, transport and marketing of staple foodstuffs. 'Vulnerability' was generally regarded as the predisposition of groups of people to be adversely affected by such shocks. Vulnerability -- and trends in vulnerability over time -- is a manifestation of underlying or chronic factors which reduce the innate resilience of households, communities, or populations -- clustered (for analytic purposes) in defined agro-ecological, demographic, economic, religious, ethnic, etc zones or groupings -- to withstand the adverse consequences of shocks. These factors often include the natural resource endowment (or changes in that patrimony over time), the economic-political policy environment, the state of productive capacity of the affected groups within the overall near-to-medium term economic production horizons, the availability of education and other social services, the adverse health/infection load, the state of nutrition and nutrition knowledge and a broad set of other factors conspiring in ways that adversely affect the ability of some or all in a polity to withstand adverse events and creating a situation of substantial, sustained and/or

downward trending food insecurity. The task for FEWS under these circumstances was “ to assess the basic vulnerability of the country and its population to famine and to identify as comprehensively and as early as possible basic pre-famine conditions ”

In early 1992, the geographic scope of the FEWS II project was expanded to cover several drought-prone countries in Southern Africa which were at that moment in the midst of one of the worst drought events of the century. Some of these newly added countries were covered from regional offices and did not have resident FEWS field staff.

In late 1991, a mid-term evaluation of the FEWS II project was conducted. Some of the more important findings and recommendations pertinent to this present Evaluation Report included:

Findings of FEWS II Mid-term Evaluation

- FEWS had enhanced the quality and effectiveness of **USAID** actions in responding to disasters and disaster mitigation. In doing so, “ the program [had] paid for itself many times over ”
- Insufficient strategic clarity and limited funding had impeded the development of host government early warning capabilities.
- Coordination problems between **USAID** and USGS impeded development of improved methodological tools.
- There was need for greater focus on i) better understanding *within USAID* of early warning methods and uses, ii) further research in, and development of, improved EW accuracy, and iii) greater cost effectiveness.

Recommendations

- Clarify lines of authority with USAID
- Reduce costs of operation
- Improve oversight of direction, task approvals and resources allocated to research
- Reduce the production effort and frequency of FEWS Bulletins
- Adopt EW *accuracy* as a ‘key goal’ involving more participation by the academic community
- Transfer vulnerability databases to USGS for long-term archiving

There had been high hopes of significant USAID Mission buy-in participation in FEWS II. The net additional financial **support** secured through buy-ins was less than ten percent of the core grant, most of it in Niger.

By mid-1993, as FEWS II was drawing to conclusion, the following seems to have summarized the view, within USAID, of FEWS overall utility, progress and future needs:

“ the interest of Missions and host countries throughout Africa in FEWS early warning and vulnerability information is widespread. Specific interests vary widely, particularly across regions of widely differing vulnerability to drought and famine. Many Missions are keenly interested in the assistance provided by FEWS in host country capacity building and problem solving so as to

improve early warning, targeted famine response and development planning. Interest is particularly high in problem solving situations, such as in helping both to identify food aid requirements as well as the populations which require food assistance. The responses, on the whole, demonstrate a strong desire by Missions to make FEWS an effective part of an on-going Mission food security-related program. However, FEWS information is not widely used for comprehensive planning both related to possible famine avoidance response as well as development planning. Several Missions clearly expressed their keen interest in having FEWS assist the host country and USAIDs plan famine responses whenever necessary, rather than focus more narrowly on early warning alone [recognizing] the importance of capacity-building as a way to create more sustainable and well integrated early warning information systems”¹

USAID’s need for continued accurate EW information together with the growing desire by the Missions for greater attention to capacity-building (which was only modestly more important within FEWS II than it had been in FEWS I), and organizational and institutional strengthening led to the decision to design and competitively bid a new FEWS III project in 1994.

3 The Design of FEWS III

The stated *goal* of FEWS III is nearly identical to that of FEWS I and FEWS II – to reduce the incidence of famine in Africa by providing the earliest possible evidence of growth in the elemental forces which conspire to produce it. The impetus, while based, in part, on the humanitarian premise that the US will not stand by and knowingly allow human beings anywhere in the world to starve to death, is also rooted in the belief that knowing of possible famine conditions as early as possible enables the most cost effective responses – an outcome denied decision-makers when they are surprised by events and forced to assist at the eleventh hour.

The project *purpose* is “ to provide host country and United States decision makers with timely and accurate information about potential famine conditions in Sub-Saharan Africa so they can make appropriate decisions about famine prevention initiatives.” Initially, in FEWS I and to a certain extent in FEWS II, the focus was on generating timely and accurate information for use by the USG. The emphasis in FEWS III is also to supply that information to host government officers, NGOs and the world at large through the widespread distribution of its printed *Bulletin* and an even broader electronic distribution via its FEWS website on the Internet.

Its *outputs* constitute a continuing series of analytical reports and special studies – based on data produced by FEWS country-based field staff, regional FEWS personnel posted to Bamako, Nairobi, Harare and Kampala, headquarters staff and a number of sources outside FEWS – informing a variety of audiences on evolving conditions in Africa which might presage possible famine. Another desired output was to increase national-level capacities to undertake data collection, analysis, reporting on, and responding to, famine, the portents of famine and severe food insecurity. Not only did these outputs deal with ‘early warning’ of adversely affected food availability, they were also intended to provide information about changes in the well-being of vulnerable, at-risk population subgroups especially regarding impeded access to food.

¹ FEWS III Project Paper, 1/28/94, p 13

The *inputs* financed by the Office of Sustainable Development in USAID/W's Africa Bureau (USAID/AFR/SD) have included the technical services of FEWS headquarters and field personnel, the supporting services of USGS, NOAA and NASA, short-term training provided to host government and NGO personnel, capacity-enhancing technical assistance provided by FEWS staff, computing power and related software, travel and transport costs and the financing of related support costs

At its heart, FEWS III was intended to be a data management and analysis, information synthesis, report preparing, and report disseminating project with the added responsibility of enhancing improved response planning by governments, and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) As such, it remains quite unlike any other USAID-financed project in Africa It is comprised of highly-skilled technicians who, on a monthly basis, gather, transmit, analyze, compress, write, edit, publish and disseminate information about constantly changing natural and human-generated trends, events and shocks which are influencing – or are likely to influence – the total production, accumulation and storing of food, its geographic availability within sub-regions of a country, the prices of foodstuffs and the ability of households to acquire command over the food they need FEWS uses a number of tools to gather and analyze data In particular, these include satellite imagery from NASA, NOAA and European satellite sources and on-the-ground assessments conducted by its own staffs or by host governments, other donors, NGOs or private researchers

The purpose of such collection, analysis and reporting is better informed decision-making by the USG, host governments, other donor governments and NGOs regarding how, when, and to what extent to respond in situations of increasing food insecurity and/or impending famine FEWS is an important element in the development of the information upon which decisions are – or should be – premised, but it is not the only factor In all of the 16 countries in which it operates, the local FEWS staff participates in an existing network of public and private organizations engaged, to a greater or lesser degree, in the gathering of data about the state of food insecurity in the country All of these organizations provide information to intended and unintended audiences A set of interrelated issues that will be considered in this Report include whether the FEWS *system* operates optimally to produce the best possible information, whether it reaches the intended audiences (particularly at the decision as opposed to the technical level), whether the information lends itself to being acted on by decision-makers appropriately ways (i.e., better response planning), and whether factors outside FEWS' sphere of control may have limited FEWS' effectiveness in generating the policy, strategy and implementation frameworks needed for effective and sustained response planning by these governments

The Project Paper (PP) listed three types of indicators which would signal the project's having been successful in completing its principal tasks

- Decision makers in USAID/W and in USAID Missions making regular use of FEWS information both as general background and in framing responses to specific famine threats

- Sustainable structural improvements in national early warning systems attributable to FEWS interventions
- A specified number of countries and USAIDs using FEWS vulnerability analyses and other FEWS inputs to develop links between Mission development programs and food security and pre-emptive famine prevention strategies

The project was to determine the most appropriate countries in which to operate, based upon evidence related to per capita caloric availability, trends in national food production and high degree of fluctuations in annual production levels. Highest priority was to be given to countries with the greatest famine risk. However, it was noted that during the course of the project, as more information about the causes of famine vulnerability was gained, the methodology for selecting countries in which FEWS was to be operating could change.

It is interesting to note that of the 18 countries listed in the Project Paper as presumed to be in the highest category of risk, FEWS had field offices in 10 as of the date of this Evaluation. Of the 14 countries in the moderate risk category, FEWS was operating in four. Of the 19 countries listed in the PP as having the lowest apparent relative famine risk, FEWS was maintaining a field office in only two – Burkina Faso and Uganda.

Additional FEWS III outputs, as proposed in the PP included

- Routine and periodic analyses covering country-level early warning analysis, detailed famine development reports, special reports on an as needed basis such as reporting on the effects of an El Niño event or widespread African drought conditions and reports to assist host country decision makers to plan famine response programs
- Developing database repositories both at the country level and – for all FEWS databases – at the USGS Eros Data Center
- Improved quality of reporting by the FEWS Field Representatives (FFRs)

The project was to be operated by a contracting entity with its headquarters in the Washington area and a cadre of technical officers, editorial staff and managers along with Country FEWS Field Representatives (CFFRs) and Assistant FEWS Field Representatives (AFFRs) in the key countries.

Section III. The Famine Early Warning System Project III

This section describes the range of activities in which FEWS staff have been engaged during the 1994-98 period. It should be viewed as a general preface to the next sections of this report dealing more specifically with description and evaluative commentary of FEWS country-based efforts in the areas of i) Early Warning, ii) Vulnerability Assessment, and iii) Response Planning.

A General Description of FEWS III Operations

The FEWS III Project came into existence in December, 1994 with the awarding by USAID/AFR/SD of a contract (AOT-0491-C-00-5021-00) with Associates in Rural Development (ARD) of Burlington Vermont as the prime contractor. The International Science and Technology Institute and the Office of Arid Lands Studies at the University of Arizona were the two sub-contractors.

FEWS III, with a proposed lifetime of five years, 1994-1999, remains, in its most fundamental sense, what FEWS has been from its mid-1980s beginning. It is a data collecting and analysis organization helping decision-makers in the US Government, a number of African governments and regional organizations, international and bilateral donor organizations, and NGOs prevent famine in Sub-Saharan Africa. FEWS staff in the US and in 14 African countries assess remotely sensed data and primary and secondary ground-based meteorological, crop and rangeland conditions data for the earliest possible indications of problems in food availability and access which, in the extreme, could lead to famine. In addition, these staff participate in assessments of factors affecting local food availability and access, including market price, socio-economic, health and nutrition data, in order to identify vulnerable population groups needing assistance. These assessments of vulnerability are regularly updated to provide information on the current status of food insecure populations.

FEWS III is managed and operated by ARD from its office in Arlington, Virginia. While the majority of the headquarters staff and all field staff are full-time or contracted employees of ARD, some headquarters staff are provided by one of the two FEWS sub-contractors, ISTI or OALS. Additional technical support is provided by specialized units of the collaborating USG agencies, USGS, NOAA and NASA from their offices in the Washington area and Sioux Falls, SD. There is also close collaboration both in Washington and in some field locations between FEWS and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Response (BHR). Internationally, FEWS collaborates closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), particularly the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) office in FAO, and with the World Food Program (WFP), especially the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Division. FEWS maintains regional offices in Harare (working with Southern Africa Development Committee (SADC), Nairobi (which maintains relations with

the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) – a consortium of governments in the Greater Horn of Africa – and in Bamako which maintains relations with the Club du Sahel, and AGHRYMET, a specialized unit of CILSS. A Regional FEWS Field Representative in Kampala has oversight for the Great Lakes Region of Eastern and Central Africa.

While FEWS activities and reporting can cover any area of Sub-Saharan Africa where conditions warrant, its primary focus encompasses those countries and regions which have historically been the most prone to serious food deprivation or famine events. FEWS has personnel in (or specifically dealing with) the following sixteen African countries:

Sahel

Burkina Faso

Chad

Mali

Mauritania

Niger

Greater Horn of Africa

Ethiopia

Kenya

Rwanda

Somalia (from Nairobi)

Sudan (from Nairobi)

Tanzania

Uganda

Southern Africa

Malawi

Mozambique

Zambia

Zimbabwe

In addition, Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Madagascar have received assistance from the FEWS regional office in Harare. Eritrea has received assistance from the FEWS staffs in Addis Ababa and Nairobi. A country FEWS office is being established in Eritrea. The country office for Somalia is financed from a USAID/Somalia 'buy-in'. There are also buy-ins provided by USAID/Malawi, USAID/Zambia, and REDSO/West Africa. Present plans are to maintain a FEWS Somalia program **linked** to REDSO/East Africa.

The operational responsibilities of the FEWS management team and staff are governed by the Statements of Work included in Contracts AOT-0491-Q-00-5022-00 and AOT-C-00-95-00021-00 as modified from time to time by exchanges of letters and by the 1995/96 USAID restructuring exercise ('re-engineering exercise'). As part of 're-engineering' FEWS III activities came under the purview of Intermediate Result 3 of AFR/SD's Strategic Objective 10.

USAID Strategic Objective and Intermediate Result governing FEWS III

SO 10 Improved Policies, Strategies and Programs for Preventing, Mitigating and Transiting Out of Crisis

IR 10.3 Improved famine prevention, drought preparedness and adoption of response plans

Central USAID oversight of FEWS III is provided by a USAID management team located in The Office of Sustainable Development in USAID/W's Africa Bureau. Oversight for the individual buy-ins is provided from the respective USAID Missions. FEWS progress against the IR and SO is reviewed periodically as part of the 'R4' exercise, most recently undertaken in early 1998.

FEWS provides for AFR/SD's review and approval an annual workplan covering its headquarters operations and for each of its field offices as well as quarterly reports detailing progress against the tasks enumerated in the workplans. In each case where there are specific USAID Mission buy-ins (Niger, Malawi, Zambia, and, until recently, Somalia) the involved country FEWS offices prepare annual workplans (except for Somalia, where six-month workplans are prepared) for approval by the pertinent USAID Missions and provide quarterly progress reports against those country-specific workplans.

The FEWS III headquarters staff is comprised of 11 professional positions as follows:

Director
Deputy Director/Socio-Economist
Agricultural Economist
Agro-climatologist
Agronomist
Computer Systems Specialist
Information and Communications Specialist
Editor and Reports Specialist
Data Management/GIS Specialist
Finance and Administration
Secretary

Note: A consultant was resident in headquarters during the time of the evaluation. This officer was slated to replace a departing RFFR in Harare in August, 1998. An filled headquarters position previously encumbered by a Food Aid Analyst will be updated to focus on response planning.

The Field staff was, as of June 15, comprised of 24 professionals resident in 14 countries in the three regions. These staff were either Regional FEWS Field Representatives (RFFRs), Country FEWS Field Representatives (CFFRs), or Assistant FEWS Field Representatives (AFFRs). (See Annex B for the full listing of personnel, by country of posting and responsibility.)

■ Tasks of FEWS Staff

During the four-year period 1994-1998 the principal ~~tasks~~ of the FEWS headquarters team included

Early Warning (EW) Related

- Preparing the monthly *FEWS Bulletin* from reports supplied from the RFFRs, CFFRs, AFFRs and other sources
- Providing monthly country monitoring and analysis reports to USAID and other **USG** personnel
- Continually updating remotely sensed data and providing it to all FEWS field units
- Continually refining field EW data-gathering and analysis techniques and sharing with field staff and others
- Continually developing and refining in-house software (RAINMAN, **AGMAN**, PRICEMAN, and SPACEMAN) associated with analysis of remotely-sensed (e.g. NDVI, CCD) and on-the-ground collection of data including agricultural, price and rainfall data
- Maintaining and expanding/improving the FEWS internet website
- Working with collaborative organizations on crop-weather models
- Working informally with USDA on analysis of regional crop conditions
- Preparing profiles of regional EW systems for AGRHYMET and IGAD and undertaking other efforts to help strengthen both regional and country EW units

Related to Vulnerability Assessments

- Continually refining vulnerability assessment methodologies, tools, indicator selection and monitoring techniques, share new techniques with FEWS field staff and others
- Preparing and conducting vulnerability assessment workshops and other training programs for FEWS field staff and others engaged in collaborative and similar efforts either generally, regionally or for specific countries
- Working with World Food Program (WFP) VAM Managers on improving country-level coordination in VA design, implementation and analysis
- Maintaining – in coordination with USGS – a complete set of databases of VA indicators **and** survey results

Related to Response Planning

- Providing guidance on how to deal with major shocks such as the recent El Niño event preparations in Eastern and Southern Africa
- Providing assistance to USAIDs (e.g. Somalia **and** Rwanda) in response planning

Related to Capacity Development

- Attending international meetings on subjects relating to early warning, drought monitoring, famine assessments, food aid needs, climatological research and improvements in predictive capacity and other methodologically-oriented seminars and workshops on EW and VA investigative and analytical tools

- Attending meetings with collaborative organizations, with USAID FEWS managers and other interested/involvement USAID and other USG personnel
- Preparing manuals, training materials and guidance on a large number of topics ranging from the field use of particular GIS software, use and interpretation of particular satellite imagery, the conduct of vulnerability assessments, rapid assessment techniques, food aid targeting, and an overall manual to guide FEWS field representatives in all their daily and episodic responsibilities
- Working on the design of cross-border trade studies
- Participating as trainers in country/regional training seminars
- Providing guidance on the preparation and writing of various FEWS reports
- Managing the internal workings of the FEWS organization, including regular correspondence with all FEWS field personnel

The tasks of the field staff – including both regional and country FEWS personnel – can be categorized as

Relating to EW

- Data gathering, usually in concert with other organizations with similar needs/interests
- Data analysis – ground-truthing, identifying anomalies, attempting to fill gaps, comparing against historical data/trends assessing importance
- Report preparation – converting data into readable and relevant information for FEWS headquarters and other users
- Preparation of specific reporting related to local emergency situations
- Briefing of local USAID and/or Embassy staffs, briefing host government officials, briefing NGO officers on developing emergency situations

Relating to VA

- Designing and undertaking vulnerability assessments
- Participation in vulnerability assessment indicator selection, field work report preparation, vulnerability mapping, targeting exercises and coordination with other organizations (e.g., Save the Children (UK), Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF))
- Undertaking country-specific tasks such as assisting local NGOs in undertaking RRA-type surveys and preparing reports

Relating to Response Planning

- Providing advisory and technical assistance to host government and NGO officers on preparedness and mitigation strategies
- Cooperating with regional OFDA in assisting governments to increase preparedness planning
- Providing assistance to NGOs in forms enabling them to develop contingency plans for various disaster situations and alerting them to the most vulnerable regions of the country

Relating to Capacity Development

- Capacity building of local EW and VA units of government, involved NGOs, other donor staff relating to unproved data gathering and analysis techques, uses of tools (even, in at least one case, training in Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word)
- Providing TA and training to strengthen the ability of regional organizations such as SADC to provide backstopping to national EW, meteorological, VA and planning units
- Employment of GIS mapping techniques to analyze and present information and training of others in these techmques

The best known and most visible of the FEWS outputs is the monthly *Bulletzn*. It is a carefully condensed and edited compilation of the most sigmificant elements contained in the monthly reports of the country and regional field offices plus information from other sources, published in both French and English in paper and electromc, Internet versions. Headquarters and field staffs combine to produce the *Bulletin* within the quite rigorous timeframe shown in Annex E.

The *Bulletin* is a six-eight page monthly publication divided into sections corresponding to the areas where FEWS is operational: Eastern Africa and the Horn, Southern Africa, and the Sahel. It regularly contains as an insert a “FEWS Special Report” of two-to-four pages on a topic of particular interest.² The lead article is the story considered most important by the FEWS/W staff. It is followed by other reports from the countries in the same region as the country featured in the lead article and then by reports from all the countries in the other two regions. The *Bulletin* is widely noted for its abundant use of maps, charts and other graphics which appear in color and which are carefully designed to be concisely informative. Several hundred copies are mailed to subscribers free of charge and copies are sent by air to all FEWS country and regional representatives in either French or English for local distribution. With the advent of the website, FEWS notified its then several thousand subscribers that, unless otherwise notified by the subscriber, FEWS would cease mailing paper copies and assume the subscriber would henceforth access the *Bulletin* and the Special Reports on the website.³ Therefore it is difficult to know exactly how many readers there are of the *Bulletin* and the Special Reports and who they are. In Southern Africa where a regional FEWS representative operates as a part of SADC, distribution of the FEWS *Bulletin* is limited so as not to conflict with the monthly “SADC Food Security Bulletin” to which FEWS staff have devoted much technical support and provided much input in an effort to strengthen, institutionally, SADC’s role in regional food security analysis.

2 Evaluative Comment on the FEWS Bulletin

The effort required of field **staff** to produce the country monthly reports and by FEWS/W **staff** to select, edit, plan, draft, and format the articles for inclusion in the *Bulletin* is extremely time consuming. There have been suggestions by at least some of the field staff that less time spent on preparation of their monthly reports would be more time available for work on vulnerability

² Recent Special Reports have dealt with, among other thmgs: i) livelihood and food security in Ethiopia’s Somali-speaking region, ii) El Niño effects on southern Africa, iii) a summary of the 1998 Sahel Vulnerability Assessments, iv) lagging food security in Uganda, v) the food security impact of floodmg in southern Somalia.

³ The URL is <http://www.fews.org>

assessments and local capacity building. On the other hand, the *Bulletin* is the most visible and most widely used product of the FEWS project. As the Team discovered during its many interviews, it is also extremely highly regarded. Even those producing similar publications such as the GIEWS reports and the country-specific MSF Bulletins were unanimous in their praise for the quality and overall usefulness of the FEWS *Bulletin*.

According to virtually all of the people interviewed for this evaluation – those in USAID/Washington, in field Missions, among donors, NGOs, and host government offices (excluding countries where contribution of the *Bulletin* is limited) and in the food security/famine research community – it is a valuable (to some an indispensable) tool for continually keeping abreast of food security and famine-related trends and events throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Within USAID/W, readership is particularly keen among managers charged with supervision of US foreign assistance resource flows to drought and famine-prone regions of Africa.

It has been difficult, however, for the Team to identify the actual manner by which information contained in the *Bulletin* and the Special Reports translates into policy, or elicits official responses to actual or emerging emergency situations. Officers in USAID, and in the other response organizations who have identified the *Bulletin* as an invaluable information tool are receiving other types of information from a number of other sources and advice and policy guidance from many individuals and organizations within and outside their own institutions regarding when, how, where and in what magnitude to respond. All that can be determined with regard to the utility of the FEWS' reports is that these individuals cite the *Bulletin* as among the best, if not *the* best, source of ongoing, timely and credible information about food security and famine-related situations in which USAID and other responding donor organizations must determine how, in what magnitude and where to respond. Many of the interviewees literally pleaded with Team members to reflect in this Evaluation their keen desire that the FEWS reporting (including not **only** the *Bulletin* and Special Reports, but local reporting as well) continue, and that such reporting continue to be made available to them.

In USAID missions, REDSO offices, and U.S. embassies, the *Bulletin* is used to keep abreast of potential trouble in individual countries and regions which could lead to situations where the mission or REDSO office might become involved in the future, either through emergency operations or through the influence of these trends and events on the mission's development program or particular activities within these programs. Often, as was noted in several Team interviews, senior mission staff use information contained in the *Bulletin* or Special Reports as agenda items or talking points for meetings with senior government officials, donor representatives or NGO leadership. Embassy officers interviewed for this Evaluation reported widespread and continuing use of the *Bulletin* and other FEWS reports as background for discussions with government officials or for their own reporting needs.

World Bank staff interviewed in Washington and in resident missions reported that they find the *Bulletin* an extremely valuable source of information on trends or events which will or could have an effect on the economy of the host country or countries, could impact on the rate of disbursement of Bank funds, or could influence the design, approval, or rate of progress in implementing a number of Social Action Fund and agriculture sector projects in drought and famine-prone African countries. Other users, such as the staff of the International Food Policy

Research Institute (IFPRI), Oxford Policy Management (OPM, formerly the Food Studies Group) in Oxford, England and The British Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London reported to the Team that they found the *BuZZetn* and Special Reports to be the best available source of timely information on impending problems affecting near-term food availability and access to food by vulnerable populations in Africa. Finally, donor and NGO representatives in all the countries visited, and in FAO and WFP offices in Rome, without exception, noted to Team members that they found the *Bulletin* and other FEWS reporting to be exceptionally useful in understanding the major trends affecting food insecurity in their country, or region, or with respect to Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

While it is difficult to pinpoint in all cases exactly what improvement in response content, timing or targeting can be said to have stemmed directly from the FEWS *BuZZetn*, Special Reports or other reporting, the overriding impression from the Team's interviews is that **all** who use the *Bulletin* find themselves significantly better informed by it. Being better informed is hypothesized to lead them to take better or more timely decisions and actions intended to respond to the situations elucidated in the *BuZZetn* than would be the case in the absence of such information, or when information is less cogently or clearly presented, or is less credible.

As a consequence of the overwhelmingly high response rate in regard to the usefulness of the *BuZZetn* to a large variety of audiences inside and outside USAID, the Evaluation Team concludes that the *Bulletin* and the work that goes into its preparation should continue to be looked at by FEWS staff as a major and important output and that its production should not be scaled back or the level of effort required for its publication reduced if such reduction would adversely affect the content or timing of the *BuZZetn* and the Special Reports. There should be, however, more effort to gain feedback from the largely unknown audience of electronic users on how they are putting it to use. A page on the FEWS website containing a fill-in form which could then be e-mailed to FEWS could be useful in terms of 'tweaking' the on-line version of the *BuZZetn* to increase its utility to users.

A recommendation (See Recommendations Section below), stemming from the Evaluation Team's interviews with FEWS field staff is for FEWS/W to take steps to make the information contained in the monthly country reporting more widely available. Several of the field staff felt that a considerable portion of their time was spent in preparing monthly reports from which only very small portions found their way into the *Bulletin*. FEWS might want to consider adding pages to their website accessible by passwords distributed to selected users by FEWS which would contain most or all of the monthly country reports.

It was noted in the Team's meetings in USAID/Washington that while many in USAID are avid users of FEWS reporting (several interviewees indicated they 'read every word'), there are still, apparently, a large number of USAID/W staff who are unaware that it is available on the internet and who do not read the *BuZZetn* regularly. While the Team was not in a position to canvass all USAID staff, or even those in the Africa, Global and Humanitarian Response Bureaus most likely to need to know what the *BuZZetn* contains, the impression was clearly made that there were many in USAID who need to be made aware of what FEWS reporting was available to them (either in the *BuZZetn*, the Special Reports or in the FEWS Country Representatives' monthly reports which are distributed on a limited basis to USAID/W personnel). It is

recommended, when technologically possible, that the computer monitors of appropriate USAID personnel contain a FEWS icon that, when clicked, would take them to the FEWS website. While users could, indeed, add a 'bookmark' to do the same thing, this suggestion is aimed at increasing the pool of USAID/W users of the electronic version of the *Bulletin*, not at those who already use the FEWS website.

3 Cooperating Partners

The FEWS staff who are provided by ARD, ISTI and OALS, work with three major cooperating partners in the US Government. The United States Geological Survey (USGS), especially the Earth Resources Observations System (EROS) in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, provides important supporting services in i) data archiving, ii) data entry and processing, iii) data management software, and iv) GIS technology. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has been an important partner in FEWS project efforts to strengthen and refine the use of climatological data in observing conditions leading to droughts, famines and other shocks in Africa. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) provides the project with important data regarding the Normalized Difference Vegetative Index (NDVI) used to measure the growth, density and health of crops and pasturelands in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Full descriptions of the roles of the cooperating partners is found at Annex C

4 The 'System' Aspects of FEWS

At the heart of the FEWS system is its structure of regional and country representatives who are its primary operatives. These country representatives gather secondary data from a wide range of sources within the country. When necessary they also i) gather primary data in adversely affected sub-regions of the country, and ii) commission, or undertake themselves, rapid appraisals of communities highly vulnerable to, or actually suffering from, severe food insecurity, conditions known to result in severe food insecurity and famine or from famine itself. The FEWS country representatives, with support from the FEWS Regional Representatives, operate in close association with government agencies, other donor officials and the staffs of NGOs to gather, analyze and report on indicators of drought, floods, insect infestations and other trends or events contributing to food insecurity, food shortages, or related serious problems being experienced by sub-populations in obtaining enough food, especially those portending famine.

In addition, country-based FEWS staff are continually engaged in efforts to improve the capacity of local cooperating agencies to gather and analyze data by providing one-on-one training in data gathering and analysis and in related methodologies and software and hardware use to increase the efficiency of these staffs in undertaking their food security-related work.

The country-based staff are assisted by a (present) total of six regional FEWS representatives – two located in Harare, two located in Nairobi and one each in Bamako and Kampala. (There is one presently unfilled regional position in the Sahel.) These regional staff have the tasks of not only providing backstopping to the country representatives, but also covering countries in their regions where there are no FEWS representatives (e.g. Angola and Burundi) and provide guidance and counsel to the three regional organizations charged with early warning,

vulnerability assessment, response planning and capacity building in their regions. These organizations are AGRHYMET (a specialized agency of CILSS) in the Sahel, IGAD in the Greater Horn of Africa, and the units of SADC responsible for confronting food insecurity in Southern Africa.

The country-based FEWS representatives are heavily dependent upon the ability of the government counterparts to collect information on crop area planted, growing conditions, yields and amounts of staple foodstuffs harvested, stored, marketed and made available to consumers. They need to receive data on market prices of foodstuffs, the amounts sold across borders as well as domestically. They need similar information on pasture conditions, numbers of livestock, the condition of livestock and the marketing of livestock. They are often unable to gain access to quality data in these areas because the government agencies responsible for collecting, analyzing and transmitting the data are unable to do it, do it completely, or on time. As a result, country staff in most of the target countries need to ground-truth suspect data, undertake on-the-ground qualitative assessments, seek alternative corroborating evidence and piece together bits of information, opinion, hearsay and best guesses to develop conclusions about important on-going events, trends and developing situations. This is needed in order to send monthly reports to FEWS which provide supporting evidence for conclusions about improving or worsening food security conditions in their country. This, to say the least, is an enormously difficult task. FEWS staff are sometimes stretched very thin, particularly in the early stages of emergency situations. Based on the Evaluation Team's field visits and many interviews, numerous indicators suggest that one-person country offices are simply not sufficiently staffed to be able to respond fully to the many demands the FEWS system places on them. This is further discussed in the 'Conclusions' and 'Recommendations' Sections below.

The FEWS Regional Representatives, too, have an enormous workload particularly in the Sahel where there is only one Regional Officer to i) backstop all the one-person FEWS country offices, ii) obtain relevant food security information about Sahelian countries where there is no on-the-ground FEWS presence, and iii) liaise with AGRHYMET. Given the present problems with government-level agencies with which FEWS needs to collaborate, the three regional organizations – AGRHYMET, IGAD and **SADC** – take on great actual and potential importance. Their roles are briefly touched on in the following paragraphs.

AGRHYMET

The AGRHYMET (Agronomy-Hydrology-Meteorology) Organization was established by CILSS (Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel) in 1974 to consolidate agro-meteorology and hydrology services in Sahelian countries and to create a center for training and applications in operational agro-meteorology and hydrology. AGRHYMET consists of a central Resource Center (ARC) in Niamey, Niger and national centers (NACs) which collect, analyze and interpret agricultural, hydrological and meteorological data. USAID provided nearly \$20 million in support for AGRHYMET through FY 1997⁴

⁴ United States Geological Survey, EROS Data Center, "Final Evaluation: Sahel Water Data and Management III Project" December, 1996, p. 1

Evaluative comment During interviews in USAID/W, the nature of the relationship between FEWS and AGRHYMET was raised as an issue. There is obvious potential for overlap between the tasks and output of the two organizations. FEWS staff, both in headquarters and in the field, believe that overlap and duplication is minimal because of good working cooperation between FEWS and AGRHYMET, particularly at the country (NAC) level, where FEWS and AGRHYMET staff collaborate in efforts to improve national capacities to provide information to ARC and to FEWS. While there are no FEWS staff in ARC, this has not prevented there being fully adequate cooperation. In the Team interview, AGRHYMET's leadership did not indicate any problem with the present relationship. Some USAID/W senior staff have expressed the view that FEWS focus exclusively on strengthening country-level agro-climatological, market information, and vulnerability data analysis and on reporting, leaving the strengthening of regional organizations, meteorology and hydrology largely to AGRHYMET.

The Evaluation Team interviewed FEWS field staff as well as senior staff at AGRHYMET and reviewed correspondence on the FEWS-AGRHYMET relationship issue. The Team has concluded i) that the issue of duplication of effort does not seem to be a large problem, ii) that country-level relations with the NACs are indeed quite good, and iii) that there is no overwhelming bureaucratic reason that FEWS needs to have a presence in the ARC regional headquarters of AGRHYMET. The problems which both FEWS and AGRHYMET need to continue to confront are largely at the country level. There may be, however, other longer-term, institutional strengthening reasons suggesting that FEWS should consider posting its second Sahel Regional FEWS Field Representative to ARC/Niamey. These reasons have to do with the apparent need for AGRHYMET to strengthen and perhaps re-orient its capacity building and institutional strengthening role in the Sahel, by providing its member governments and others with stronger socio-economic analysis skills. FEWS can be of considerable help – together with other international actors – in assisting AGRHYMET to move in this direction. The terms of reference for such a posting should, of course, be thoroughly discussed with AGRHYMET leadership and be of demonstrable mutual benefit to both AGRHYMET and FEWS. This concept is further discussed elsewhere – in the context of capacity building, and in the conclusions and the recommendations sections. This recommendation should not be seen as attenuating needed attention by both FEWS and AGRHYMET on the more important problem of finding ways to bolster, as a matter of great urgency, several Sahelian country EW units which are deteriorating administratively and financially. This is also discussed at length elsewhere in this Report.

IGAD

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a regional organization formed by the governments of the Greater Horn of Africa, headquartered in Djibouti as a sub-regional inter-governmental organization mandated by its member states to address development and conflict management issues and to focus on regional food security and conflict resolution (e.g., Sudan and Somalia) in the GHA region. It is supported by USAID, the European Union, the United Nations Development Program, as well as a number of bilateral governments. There has been a strong push under USAID's Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI) to revitalize IGAD to make it, among other things, a much stronger regional force in dealing with common development problems in the region.

Evaluative comment The role of FEWS in support of a stronger IGAD capacity to deal with issues of food insecurity in the Greater Horn needs further strengthening IGAD itself, as is also true of USAID's GHAI, focuses largely on those aspects of the problems of this large geographic area of Africa which are regional in nature. Fair enough. Unfortunately what is needed, probably more than anything else in the region – *if improved* – is a region-based capability to *confront* the causes of food insecurity. The goal – is a region-based capability to strengthen country-level (public and private sector) skills and capacities to work toward this goal. One **task** of a regional organization such as IGAD – or so it seems to the Evaluation Team – is to offer its member countries continuing capacity-enhancing training and other support to strengthen country-level organizations and institutions. The majority of the causes of food insecurity, as experienced by most food insecure households, are not, in the main, regional. They are sub-regional or local, very often at the sub-national or community level. The responses need, generally, to be locally focused and locally designed. The Greater Horn region needs a regional base for providing training and capacity building to the staffs of member governments (particularly to people in local governments) and to both international and domestic NGOs in the region to enable them to help communities to determine for themselves what their problems are, where they originate and how to better confront them. FEWS support to IGAD (or, possibly, to the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute [ESAMI] at Arusha, Tanzania) should begin to focus on these aspects, much as it has been doing with some preliminary success in SADC.

SADC

The Southern African Development Community (**SADC**), which was established in 1980 as SADCC, promotes regional cooperation in economic development. It has adopted a Program of Action detailing cooperation in various economic development sectors, including food security. In order to enhance food security for the region, SADC established a Food Security Program, with a Food Security Technical and Administrative Unit (FSTAU) in Harare, Zimbabwe as its secretariat. At its inception, the Community agreed that individual countries should be given the responsibility for implementing regional programmes in particular economic or social spheres. Zimbabwe was given the responsibility for regional cooperation in food security. In fulfillment of this obligation, Zimbabwe set up a coordinating unit and developed a regional food security program, the overall objectives of which are: i) helping ensure that adequate supplies of food are always available, ii) helping ensure that households have the capacity to acquire food by means of their own production or through cash purchases, iii) helping ensure the natural resource base is conserved, and iv) helping work towards improvements in nutrition.

Evaluative comment Of the three regional organizations with which FEWS works, **SADC** is the furthest along in providing food security related support to its member countries. While AGRHYMET is focused on agro-climatological information gathering and reporting and IGAD has had to deal largely with conflict resolution, SADC has dealt with vulnerability assessment, causality of food insecurity, and strengthening of individual country capacity to deal with food insecurity. This is due, in part, to previous USAID-financing of a long-term contract with Michigan State University's Department of Agricultural Economics providing support to the SADC entity in Zimbabwe charged with confronting food insecurity in the region. This effort endured for more than 15 years, and yielded important dividends in terms of producing both technical and policy level officers conversant with food security issues in most of the governments of the SADC region.

FEWS regional staff maintains a very close working relationship with SADC, so much so, in fact, that when they travel in the region, they are received as SADC rather than FEWS representatives. They have close and ready access to SADC decision-makers and through them to senior officers in the constituent governments who deal with food security issues. The FEWS SADC relationship is close to optimum, one that is particularly important to SADC in light of tight budgets which hamper, to a certain degree, SADC's ability to discharge fully its various food security responsibilities. FEWS regional staff help SADC meet its many food security commitments.

B Evaluative Comments on the FEWS 'System'

While the following sections of the Report deal specifically with FEWS' country experience in early warning, vulnerability assessment, and response planning both in headquarters and in a large number of quite distinctly different country situations, there is need to offer preliminary comment here on the 'system' aspects of the FEWS activity. FEWS *is* a system as much as it is a project. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *system* as "a set of objects or appliances arranged or organized for some special purpose, as parts of a mechanism, components of an interdependent or interconnecting assembly or network." Part of the task of this Evaluation is to attempt to determine whether the FEWS system, as designed and as it has been functioning during the 1994-98 period, is well-suited to the task for which it has been created. Later in this Report, the Team describes and comments on specific components of the FEWS system. Here, we comment on the whole.

The FEWS system is comprised of country FEWS representatives (and the organizations and individuals they coordinate with at the local level) the FEWS regional representatives (and their constituent regional organizations) the ARD/ISTI/OALS headquarters staff and the USG complementary organizations (USDA, NASA, NOAA, USGS). It is designed to collect, analyze and report on current and comparative values of selected agro-climatological, environmental, economic, health/nutrition and food consumption indicators in order to determine their impact on actual and predicted levels of food production and availability and the access to that food by potentially vulnerable population groups.

Unlike any other USAID-financed activity in Sub-Saharan Africa, FEWS is intended to collect continually all data relevant to the earliest possible diagnosis of impending severe food insecurity (i.e. availability of, and access to adequate food) and famine in Sub-Saharan Africa and to provide timely warning to the USG, host governments, and other involved organizations. Starting first in the Sahel and expanding to the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa regions, FEWS has established baselines and methodology comparing current data against these baselines in order to detect anomalies presaging problems. There has been continual improvement in both the quality of the data resident in the baselines and in the current data collection processes, in large part due to FEWS' willingness to cooperate with all other organizations similarly engaged and the data and methodology sharing and general cooperation thus engendered.

In the actual implementation of this data collection and analysis process, FEWS staff are continually faced with problems of data inadequacy and data unavailability. The field staff is small, making it quite often not physically possible to collect primary data except impressiomstically, qualitatively or anecdotally. Therefore, FEWS field personnel must, whenever possible, rely on many other organizations – usually national early warning (EW) personnel, agricultural extension agents, central statistics office enumerators or NGO staff to collect and share (with FEWS) the data. Often, as is noted elsewhere in the Report, the staffs of these organizations are too few, too under-funded, too under-motivated, too poorly supported to collect sufficiently extensive, sufficiently valid, food availability, price, trade, nutrition or other food security-related data. In this increasingly common situation, what is perhaps the smgle most important attribute of FEWS field staff is brought into play – their ability to judge the quality of the data, to mterpret it, to converge it with other types of often equally poor data and to extract out of all of the bits and pieces a reasonably accurate and credible picture of the underlying situation.

This effort is difficult. It requires considerable tune, extensive travel, lots of conversations and the use of innate good judgment. Each month, all of the information gathered and analyzed must be compressed into a report to FEWS/W, some portion of which will find its way into the *Bulletin* and/or into reports to the local USAID Mission or the U S Embassy. The information from periodic vulnerability assessments and from sources outside of the FEWS network is also stirred into the mix.

The software tools (eg AGMAN, RAINMAN, SPACEMAN, PRICEMAN)⁵ FEWS has developed and which are used for analysis, writing, transmission and presentations are also provided to many of their local colleagues, with training often part of the package. **An** important part of the FEWS system is the presence of the regional representatwes in the three sub-regions to help in this tool-sharing task and in other aspects of capacity building – both at the country level and in regional institutions with which they are engaged. Their tasks are as diverse **as** they are important. In thinking about the future of FEWS, as is done in Section V below, it is the potential future roles of the regional staff that come under the most intense scrutiny. From a ‘systems’ perspective, the primary role of the regional representatives is to help backstop and furthertrain the FEWS country representatwes and assistant representatives and **as** many of their country-level colleagues **as** possible. When it is worlung well, **as** in Southern Africa, the regional representatives can play an important ‘shortstopping’ role, quickly available to the country representative on an as-needed basis, to help deal with prickly, complex problems or simply to lend an added set of hands when the workload piles up. In addition, they are often available to help country counterparts design vulnerability assessments, resolve data collechon problems, advise on food security presentations intended to make a lasting impression on a group of senior government staff or a group of donor representatives. The essenhal role the regional representatives must play in strengthening the capacities of regional organizations is further discussed in Sections IV and V.

The FEWS headquarters staff are primarily responsible for forming data, information and country-based reporting inputs into a continuing stream of USAID-usable products. It has

⁵ The ‘MAN’ in the software name is short for ‘manager’.

responsibility for supervision of field staff, producing handbooks and manuals to guide field staff in all aspects of their EW-related data gathering, analysis and reporting and reporting activities, for coordination with USGS, NOAA and NASA on their software development, data archiving and analysis, and the acquisition and use of remotely sensed data and the development of additional training materials associated with these aspects of the activity. The FEWS II Mid-term Evaluation noted the need for improved cooperation between FEWS headquarters and USGS staff. This has now been achieved and appears to be working quite smoothly and effectively. In addition, FEWS headquarters staff are in constant contact with the USAID/AFR/SD supervision unit and with OFDA and Food for Peace in the Bureau for Humanitarian Response (BHR).

The team concludes that this 'system' works very well to produce a product – reporting – of high quality and reliability under difficult, sometimes even dangerous conditions in the field and a demanding need for the final product in Washington. It does so because i) it is flexible and locally adaptable at the country level, ii) it sets and maintains tight deadlines, iii) its field and headquarters staffs have the ability to sort out the more important from the less important information, and iv) most important of all – it uses well the talent, motivation and intelligence of a highly dedicated staff

In sum, the system pulls an enormous amount of data – some good, some bad – out of the targeted countries in many diverse, even intriguing, ways and fashions it into a series of well-written, well-organized, informative and influential reports which, with admirable clarity and succinctness, continually inform its intended audience about the food security state-of-play and the state of the constantly changing sets of factors which signal advances or declines in conditions giving rise to famine. It does this job better than any similar reporting system now in existence.

The remainder of this Evaluation focuses specifically on the three primary functional categories of FEWS performance during the 1994-98 period: i) early warning, ii) vulnerability assessments, and iii) response planning. Issues related to capacity development and institutional strengthening are discussed, as appropriate, within each of these sub-sections of the Report.

C Early Warning

“Early warning” incorporates those elements of FEWS activities tracking changes in the conditions, or factors, creating a famine situation among identifiable populations or within definable geographical regions. ‘Famine’ can, for most purposes, be defined quite simply as “a severe scarcity of food throughout a region.” An ‘early warning system’ is one which determines the best signals of the beginnings, or enabling circumstances for the emergence, of famine and a concerted, organized and extensive set of monitoring and analysis arrangements. It also includes a reporting process which tracks the status of – or changes in – those signals and promptly and regularly alerts appropriate decision-makers.

1 Description and Discussion

This section contains generalized description and evaluative commentary about how FEWS handles its EW responsibilities in Sub-Saharan Africa, and what utility and impact that information has had. It responds to the Terms of Reference governing the preparation of this Evaluation Report. The TOR requests that the Team review FEWS performance in providing timely and credible early warning as evinced in: i) the manner of providing timely, reliable, credible evidence on factors affecting food availability and access, ii) the manner in which the EW information is disseminated to decision-makers, iii) the provision of data and data-gathering and analytical tools/skills to African organizations with regional and country-specific EW responsibilities, iv) enhancing coordination among all EW actors at country and regional levels, and v) specific instances of how FEWS, FAO/GIEWS and WFP operate together on international early warning and joint crop and food supply missions. This section treats these concerns **from an issue/problem/success perspective**. Additional country-specific tasks, achievements, evaluative commentary and issues are found in Annex A.

FEWS' foremost task remains, as it has been since the project was created, the early warning of conditions signaling impending famine. Above all else, FEWS has been and remains predominately a system for gathering data for, and in, countries and regions in Sub-Saharan Africa historically at risk of famine. It should be kept in mind that what is required of FEWS is not only to alert about the existence of famine, but also to alert about the factors likely to *cause* famines. Famine is a condition resulting from a convergence of circumstances. The task for FEWS is, thus, to identify the increase or decrease in these circumstances (usually relating to actual or anticipated food availability), to monitor these signals constantly, and to report when some or all of them are changing for the better or for the worse. If food is not going to be available in adequate amounts for some population groups or in particular regions, the EW job for FEWS **is** to detect those changes at the earliest possible time and to be able to determine, with an acceptable degree of statistical confidence what they portend in terms of food availability. (Factors influencing **access** to food are dealt with more fully in the discussion of 'vulnerability assessment' below.)

With resident country staff in 14 countries and regional staff in the Sahel, The Greater Horn and Southern Africa, FEWS field personnel continually monitor with the help of remotely-sensed data provided by its USG cooperating partners, rainfall, crop, pasture and livestock conditions, food availability, food and energy prices, transport problems, actual and planned donor responses, the status of active famine situations (as presently is the case in Southern Sudan) and provides estimates and forecasts regarding near and medium-term probabilities of impending problems.

The methodology brings together, on the one hand, the advanced satellite imagery, computer-generated graphics and analytical software packages described previously, and, on the other hand, actual, on-the-ground meteorological data, crop and livestock data, food stock estimates, data and estimates on country capacities to import food, nutritional information, market price and market activity data and information on household expenditures, economic activity, and coping and adapting strategies gathered through the use of various rapid appraisal techniques. Differing country situations require differing mixes of remotely-sensed data, locally-collected data and

FEWS representatives' 'eye-balling' of threatening, local situations. If there is one overriding characteristic that defines the FEWS 'method' it is the ability to adapt the information-gathering and analysis techniques to fit the particular country endowment of information sources and information constraints. In a country like Rwanda, for example, satellite NDVI data is viewed by many as nearly 'useless' because of the mountainous topography and the large number of cloudy days which greatly reduces the efficacy of the imagery. In another country, flat, cloudless Chad, for example, satellite imagery is the mainstay in understanding vegetative and pasture resiliency in a country where the government's on-the-ground assessment capacity has nearly totally collapsed, forcing heavy reliance on the interpretation of remotely sensed conditions.

FEWS has had to recruit both expatriates and, increasingly, nationals of the target countries to undertake its early warning reporting tasks. These recruits have been knowledgeable about the technology, conversant with the issues of food security data, innately analytical, trainable, highly motivated, reasonably self-reliant and adaptable. Another aspect of FEWS' ability to continue to produce EW reports of high quality has been that staff turn-over has been exceptionally low. FEWS staff generally appear to derive great pleasure from their work, seem to be proud of the quality and timeliness of their products and willing to stay with these jobs year after year – in many places under difficult, often highly stressful, circumstances. It was said, over and over by interviewees in all types of organizations, during the course of this Evaluation, "FEWS is good because the people it has recruited are good." The early warning effort in any of these countries fails if the FEWS representation is not adequate to the task. The Evaluation found, in all countries visited, that the FEWS field staff were indeed adequate to the task.

It will, thus, come as little surprise to the reader of this Evaluation that our most important conclusion is also the most obvious – FEWS produces a high quality product, constantly and on time, in large part because of the high quality of FEWS staff, top to bottom. The first and most visible signal of appropriate capacity-building has been the selection, training and further development of country nationals as FEWS country representatives. While it is not certain why this is so, it was evident to the Team that in all three regions and headquarters it is so.

Establishing Credibility

The FEWS experience in Malawi is a good example of the importance over the lifetime of the FEWS presence in a country in initially establishing good credibility – and in a very real sense being able to use credibility, once instituted, to subsequently establish its professional ‘credentials’ as an indispensable link in the chain of food security-related information gathering and dissemination. This, in turn, enabled access to all available food security-related data gathering processes and enabled FEWS to target its data improvement and capacity-enhancing skills precisely on the most relevant data and most appropriate staff.

In part due to its location in a government office bloc shared with other units of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI), FEWS/Malawi, almost from its first day, was viewed by other GOM staff as if it were a member of the ‘team’. FEWS staff were routinely invited to internal meetings where crop assessment and food price data efforts were designed and their data reviewed. FEWS staff were, thus, able to begin the process of improving the GOM’s design of data acquisition and the refining of the methods of analysis very early in the Project’s lifetime and, as a result, to have made much real progress over the ensuing years. For example, FEWS staff initially discovered that EPA-level data (EPAs are a sub-district administrative level) were presented orally in meetings, on an EPA-by-EPA basis. The mere presentation of the numbers consumed two full working days of committee meetings. The FEWS representatives took laptops to the meetings and converted into spreadsheet data on the spot, the EPA data being read aloud. The spreadsheet data could then be updated and cleaned far more quickly than by means of the existing manual processing. Soon, the entire crop assessment exercise was being converted into spreadsheets with FEWS assistance, *before* being reviewed in Lilongwe –cutting the time for initial presentation from two days to an hour or two and enabling much better focus on the data and the underlying picture that could be developed from the data.

From that point onward, FEWS was increasingly seen – both within and outside the Malawian government – as the organization responsible for both improving data gathering and analysis processes and for ground-truthing and producing rapidly, credible crop and price information for a wide and clearly appreciative set of users.

Its physical presence close to those in government responsible for producing these types of information was key to its success.

In order to complete their reporting requirements, FEWS field staff must rely, as has been mentioned, on a large number of sources of locally-collected data. These sources differ from one country to another but generally include the crop and livestock assessments of field extension staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, information collected by rural health posts on nutritional status, household survey data collected by central statistic organizations, trade information from Ministries of Commerce and market and price data from any of a number of sources. In every country in which FEWS operates there is a unit of government – usually in the Ministry of Agriculture – which serves as the government’s early warning organization – usually referred to as ‘Early Warning Units’ (EWUs, or SAPs in the Sahel). In addition, in most countries there is an organization or coordinating body charged with bringing together and assessing data and information related to national or household food security status. Such units may be at the technical level or policy level or, occasionally, both. In some countries, such as Mozambique, the food security policy entity is visible and important. In others such as Chad, Kenya or Zimbabwe, a food security policy entity functions not at all or only intermittently, in response to a crisis. In

SADC, in Southern Africa, and in the Sahel, in the CILSS context, there are organizations charged with tracking regional food security situations and coordinating information flows between member governments

Normally, country FEWS representatives work most closely with the local EWU. In some places (e.g. Malawi and Mozambique) the FEWS representative(s) are located in offices within or adjacent to the EWU. The FEWS representative often travels with EWU personnel on crop assessments, and other field visits. He/she receives field data collected by enumerators employed by central statistics organizations or by Agriculture extension staff and helps to clean and analyze it. In several countries, FEWS has provided training and technical assistance to local EWU personnel plus some training in methodological improvements to those in government charged with analysis and interpretation of information related to food availability, rural market prices, trade flows, food balance sheet preparation, food needs assessments, household expenditure surveys and community-based assessments. This has included assistance in spreadsheet and database design and manipulation, in use of statistical software packages, in the use of GIS mapping techniques and in the design and conduct of field surveys, including those of the rapid appraisal type.

Field work is important for EW information gathering and report preparation. FEWS staff are not able to rely fully on secondary data gathered by others, especially in countries – all too often the case in Sub-Saharan Africa – where field data gathering is beset with conceptual, logistic and analytical problems. Therefore, FEWS representatives normally travel into the field to gather data and otherwise assess the food situation several times a year – particularly during planting, harvesting, post harvest and ‘lean season’ periods. In addition – and a component of FEWS III not found in FEWS I or II – in countries where animals form a significant share of household wealth and agricultural activity, ground-truthing of livestock sales and price data (or, in the Eastern Sahel of the ‘animal-cereal terms of trade’) is also an important activity of the FEWS representative.

In addition to the normal gathering of crop, livestock and market price data that is undertaken with local EWU or extension personnel, FEWS representatives are often called upon to participate in special FAO/WFP Crop Assessment Missions in which a team of experts is assembled under the leadership of Rome-based FAO or WFP officers and which undertakes special field visits abetted by data gathered in the normal course of events by the extension staff. These special assessments are normally convened when there are reasons to suspect that serious crop shortfalls may be occurring. Increasingly over the several years that FEWS has been present in drought-prone Africa, the local FEWS representatives have been asked to participate in these Missions to the point, now, where FEWS involvement is almost routine.

Normally, these FAO/WFP Missions perform a valuable function in adding to the store of information about current conditions, the food balance sheet and in affirming (or not) local estimates of food aid requirements. Sometimes, however, as was the case in the May, 1998 Crop Assessment for Zambia, an FAO/WFP Crop Appraisal can result in a Report that, for reasons particular to the methods by which the data were gathered and the Report prepared, contains

conclusions regarding food aid needs which are not accepted as accurate by the government, local donor representatives, food aid organizations or NGOs⁶

The FEWS EW outputs come in many forms – the FEWS *Bulletin*, Monthly reporting by the FEWS field representatives, inputs into regional EW of food security bulletins, inputs into country bulletins **and** a variety of crop assessment reports, special reports, and individually tailored reports for the local USAID Mission or US Embassy or in response to particular requests. During the Evaluation, the Team members interviewed numerous users in Washington, in each of the 13 countries visited, in Rome and elsewhere (via e-mail). Within individual African countries, the users tended to be most interested in local FEWS reporting products. The *Bulletin* was generally regarded as excellent background reading. Of more immediate interest, however, was the local FEWS reporting – the Third Round Crop Assessment in Malawi, for example, or the FEWS monthly local country reports in Mali. In the USAID Missions, the most important immediate reporting tended to be the Monthly Report prepared by the local FEWS representative for FEWS/W. In USAID/W, elsewhere in Washington and in Rome, the most important product was the *Bulletin* itself. One theme was common among virtually all users interviewed. No matter which of the EW reporting products was being referred to, the interviewees, with few exceptions felt that the FEWS reporting was the best, or most accurate, or most timely of all information available. If comments about the superior quality of the FEWS staff was the single most common theme from all of the Team's interviews, favorable comments about the quality of the reporting was the next most common theme. The producers of the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) reporting in Rome were particularly laudatory about the high professional quality of the FEWS *Bulletin* and other FEWS reporting.

The Team looked into situations where there might be possible overlap between FEWS EW reporting and that of other organizations, particularly GIEWS. At the country level, there tended to be few problems – except in countries, such as Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, where the 'official' reports on food needs requirements identified amounts of food requirements that were regularly higher (for a variety of reasons) than FEWS' estimates. Cooperation and sharing of information were the consistent themes with regard to early warning activities rather than conflicts or duplication. There are instances such as in Uganda, Rwanda, and Chad where the local FEWS representative has made the decision not to publish local FEWS reporting which contained, say, estimated food aid requirements significantly different from the government's figures. The normal mode of operation is to try to resolve any such differences before two or more different sets of numbers start circulating or to attempt to resolve conflicting estimates through private discussions rather than in public debate.

The FAO/GIEWS Director indicated that, in fact, FEWS and GIEWS were in a continually collaborative mode. The GIEWS mandate is global, not Africa specific, and the focus is on national-level data, not the sub-national levels where FEWS focuses. The two organizations are in constant contact over shared interests in methodology and techniques and share their data and findings. The GIEWS Director said it would be helpful if FEWS could share more of its country reporting with GIEWS, as some (but not all) FEWS Country Representatives do informally with local FAO offices (See Recommendation Section below).

⁶ See pp 36-37 below

The problem of acquiring accurate, timely and representative data on food availability is exacerbated for virtually all country FEWS personnel by the weaknesses of the country data collection and analysis organizations. Almost without exception, the NEWUs with which FEWS works in Africa can be grouped along a relatively short spectrum ranging from 'weak to extremely weak'. There is no EWU in these sixteen countries which can be rated anything higher than weak, with the possible exception of the DPPC organization in Ethiopia (See, however, the Ethiopia Country Report in Annex A). Normally they are two- three- or four-person units, deeply buried in the superstructures of the national ministries of agriculture. The staffs are normally poorly paid. They use computer equipment provided under a variety of earlier donor projects which, while only a few years old, is ancient in 'computer-years' and not capable of manipulating complex datasets or in merging data with GIS mapping or agroclimatic imagery.

In addition, these units have often been financed more or less totally by external assistance. As such assistance has concluded in many African countries, the recipient governments have had to scramble, not always successfully, for replacement financing. The problem is compounded by the fact that foreign aid financing typically shows up in the 'development' or 'investment' side of the recipient government's budget rather than in the recurrent expenditure side. As a result, when donor support for EW units ends, the host government should take over the costs of continuing the unit as a recurrent budget line item. Unfortunately, the completion of donor financing for many of these EW units is occurring at the very time when recipient governments are under severe IMF and World Bank strictures to reduce recurrent account expenditures as a means of reducing government budgetary deficits. As a result, these governments are, or soon will be, hard pressed to find room in shrinking budgets to finance early warning activities. In Chad funding has completely dried up for the SAP, Chad's EWU. In Mozambique, EU financing for the EW has been (hopefully temporarily) suspended and in most other countries, funds are totally inadequate to enable the local EWUs to complete their tasks.

This trend is one of the most serious problems FEWS faces. It may well portend extremely serious data gathering problems in the next few years. The recent case in Chad where a serious pocket of famine in the southern part of the country went undiscovered, in part because the EWU was no longer functionally operational, may be but an early signal of seriously degraded data availability from remote regions of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where funding for Early Warning Units and for other aspects of data gathering is no longer available.

Under these circumstances, it is extremely difficult for the local FEWS representatives to successfully discharge their data gathering and analysis responsibilities. The FEWS officers have to play a much more active role in 'ground-truthing' data, seeking and removing glitches, anomalies, gaps, and simply bad guessing on the part of their host country counterparts. Over the years, many FEWS representatives have become very adept at discovering omissions and apparent fallacious data. In Malawi, for example, the local FEWS office routinely does the final drafting of the government's round one, two and three crop estimates before they are published. The CFFR contacts government field staff directly and questions them on the data they have submitted to Lilongwe and the methods used for acquiring it. He reviews all primary data sources and finds ways to fill in the gaps before the surveys are published. As a result, crop surveys and

estimates in Malawi have become widely respected and widely used – for example, by Cargill and other international businesses

There are a number of ways in which country FEWS representatives can attempt to compensate for unreliable, late or non-existent data. Satellite imagery can provide a sense of rainfall and crop growing conditions and can suggest anomalous conditions in certain geographic areas where ground-truthing is needed. Anecdotal information provided by local government organizations, NGOs, and local community-based organizations (CBOs) is often of great value in alerting FEWS representatives to the existence of food availability or access problems, or both. In the final analysis, however, FEWS, as presently configured, cannot be expected to fill data gaps which are getting wider and more numerous in many of these countries. The Conclusions and Recommendations Sections below further discuss this issue.

2 Evaluative Comments on the Early Warning Aspects of FEWS III

Given the performance of the FEWS system over the past four years, not to mention during the periods of FEWS I and II, it has been difficult to imagine that adverse changes in the major factors creating famine in any of the countries under constant FEWS review would go undetected – except, possibly, in i) very small, remote, localized and difficult to access geographic areas, ii) war zones where on-the-ground monitoring was impossible, iii) situations where FEWS access was denied and data were actively suppressed or altered by local authorities. Even in Chad, Southern Sudan and Somalia, where access to much of the country is difficult and official data-collection by governments non-existent, FEWS has been able to track the development of drought, flood or famine conditions with commendable timeliness and to report on levels of likely food aid requirements with reasonable accuracy. As noted above, however, and in the Conclusions and Recommendations Sections, the Team concludes that this statement could prove to be less true in the future.

The increasing weakness of national Early Warning Units have already been discussed. They are poorly staffed, lack sustained sources of funding and deeply buried several bureaucratic layers deep in ministries of agriculture. Almost without exception,⁷ they lack direct access to decision-makers. In several countries such as Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda and Mozambique, the FEWS representative(s) are housed in, or adjacent to these NEWUs and have been engaged in technical training and capacity building with their counterparts on the staffs of the NEWUs. Such training has involved improving abilities to interpret remotely sensed data, training in the use of spreadsheet, word-processing, statistical or FEWS-developed interpretative software, unproved marketing analysis tools, GIS mapping/data interchanges, survey design, conduct and data analysis and methodologies for weighing and comparing indicators (as well as training related to vulnerability assessments, discussed in the next section).

Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, many of the people in early warning units and other government organizations in these countries who had been trained or had skills upgraded by FEWS staff have moved to other jobs in their governments or left government service. The turn-

⁷ The possible exception to this is Ethiopia, but even in Ethiopia the relationship between the EW Unit in DPPC and government decision-makers outside of DPPC remains unclear.

over rate among those trained by FEWS is extremely high, in part because the training itself enables them to land jobs with higher emolument, and in part because working in government early warning jobs lacks status, is low paid (or, as in Chad, not paid at all for months at a time) or is highly frustrating. In some cases, as in Malawi, the Evaluation Team discovered that the high rate of AIDS infection and related health problems (e.g. TB) had led to significant losses among trained EW staff.

The important conclusion derived from this finding is that ad hoc or one-on-one training programs are unlikely to produce a long term pay-off in terms of generally unproved skills among those in these countries charged with gathering and analyzing food security-related information. The attrition is too immediate and too high. The problem stems in part from widespread shortages in budget resources for the governments of these countries, in part from gradual termination of donor financial support for EW units, agricultural data collection or food security projects in a number of the more drought-prone African countries. Donor support has always been on a project basis and projects have a finite lifetime. Support for several EW units has ended (Chad), is ending (Zimbabwe), or is threatened (Mozambique). In Chad, the Evaluation Team determined that at least some in government simply did not want to know what the food security situation really was.

The net result of these factors is likely to become a deepening problem for FEWS in its seeking the best possible data and information – caused by continuing erosion in the capacity of these governments to field the staff required to collect the data for assessing food availability. The consequences of this, as noted elsewhere, are troubling in terms of FEWS' future ability to report on serious food insecurity or changes in famine indicators – especially those aspects that relate to the ability of remote rural households to cope or adapt to deteriorating long-term factors adversely affecting food availability.

Another area of possible concern is the fact, which came to light during the Evaluation, that the European Union (EU) appears to be establishing its own version of FEWS. The Team was informed by EU staff in Maputo, that the EU was in the late stages of developing its own FEWS-like operation, with the acronym RESAL. It is apparently intended to be a Brussels-based unit which operates much like FEWS/W in obtaining and interpreting information about food security problems in Sub-Saharan Africa. The FAO and WFP offices in Rome confirmed that the EU was developing a food security research operation which would analyze existing data and information flows, but which was not, apparently, planning to establish a permanent field presence in Africa. The Team believes that FEWS/W and USAID/W should seek to discover the nature of the RESAL operation (which is scheduled to start operations in September, 1998) and determine whether there might, in fact, be potential for cooperation in the future.

In Zambia, the Team came upon another type of problem worth mentioning in this Report (although the Team was later informed that this Zambia problem was not characteristic of FAO crop assessment missions generally). What apparently occurred is that, in response to a Government of Zambia request, FAO/WFP mounted a special crop and food supply assessment mission to Zambia during April and May, 1998 to determine the actual status of the 1997/98 cereals harvest after the El Niño impact of drought conditions in the south and heavy rainfall in the north. The FEWS/Zambia AFFR was asked to participate on the team and she participated in

field survey work in the country's Southern Province. The final version of the assessment was drafted by two FAO officers from Rome which was apparently not vetted by other members of the Mission until after the final estimates of maize and other cereal production, prepared by these two individuals, had been presented to ministerial-level members of the government. It was at that point that the FEWS representative and others discovered that the drafters of the FAO/WFP Final Report had made substantial changes in the government's estimates of the maize harvest and had calculated a food aid requirement significantly higher than estimates made by FEWS and other organizations in Zambia. The FEWS Representative did not concur in these revised numbers but was unable to have her name removed from the cover page of the FAO/WFP Mission's report and, thus, was seemingly among those concurring in the food aid estimates contained in that Report.

When this problem was raised by the Evaluation Team with GIEWS in Rome, the Team was informed that GIEWS was aware of the problems with this particular report and expressed concern regarding how the issue of conflicting estimates of food needs was handled at the time. The GIEWS Director did state however, that it was not uncommon for some members of any Crop assessment mission to disagree with the consensus view of the other members of the Mission. Listing of the names and organizations of all who had participated in a crop surveillance mission did not imply that all had concurred fully in all particulars of the final report. The Team suggests FEWS/W alert all FEWS representatives that, while participation in FAO/WFP crop assessments is encouraged, the FEWS participants in such Missions be very clear and forthright in their disagreements, when they occur, and keep both the local USAID and FEWS/W fully informed of the nature and rationale of such differences of view.

D Assessing Vulnerability to Food Insecurity

1 Description and Discussion

FEWS has been concerned about household vulnerability to food insecurity and famines since the early days of FEWS I. This concern, in its most elemental form, relates to factors which inhibit sustained access by the household, community, population group or inhabitants of a geographic area to adequate levels of food. It deals with declining resilience of households or populations in confronting and overcoming the adverse impact of shocks and it deals with underlying trends in chronic factors of food insecurity.

Vulnerability assessments, in effect, add the "access" side of the food security domain to the "availability" side. If early warning analysis deals with the probability or risk that an adverse event or shock will affect vulnerable populations in Africa, vulnerability analysis presents additional data and analysis suggesting just how vulnerable different populations actually are, or will be, to such a shock. It deals with the propensity, or predisposition, to be adversely affected and the likely extent and duration of the adverse effect. It looks at how these populations have dealt with such adversity in the past – what factors have enabled these population groups to survive past catastrophes – and analyzes their ability to weather existing or projected calamities in the near future. Further, done well, a VA enables the researcher and development planner to

consider whether there have been changes in the configuration of causality, or in the factors constituting the household's response capacity, which may have degraded the effectiveness of traditional 'coping strategies' in the face of today's adverse event, or tomorrow's likely adverse event

The Terms of Reference guiding this Evaluation asks the Team to describe i) where and in what ways FEWS has been undertaking vulnerability assessments, ii) the design of assessments enabling African governments and USAIDs to target their resources to best advantage, iii) how FEWS has influenced the design of vulnerability assessments, iv) the tools, analytical methods and other capacity enhancing aspects of FEWS' efforts in vulnerability assessment, v) how FEWS has provided data that enhances the ability of African governments and regional organizations to conduct VAs, vi) how, where, and in what ways cooperation has been achieved

VAs of one sort or another are now being done by FEWS in combination with the World Food Program (WFP), governments, NGOs, or (decreasingly) on its own. Of the **16** countries where there is a FEWS presence, VAs are being done in 13 and planned for Tanzania. Even in Southern Sudan and Somalia, where the data and field work cannot presently be undertaken, VA methods have been adapted to rapid assessment methods in order to undertake limited, geographically focused risk, or vulnerability, assessments in areas where serious food insecurity is suspected

For more than ten years FEWS has assessed vulnerability of populations and sub-populations in Sub-Saharan Africa by having focused to a large extent on "the degree of shock associated with the current events" as measured against

- Past harvest shocks and other recent income shocks
- Degree of dependence of the sub-population on own production for meeting food needs
- Level, diversity and resiliency of other income sources
- Availability of cereals in local markets and amplitude of historical and recent price fluctuations
- Coping *and adapting* strategies employed by these sub-populations in dealing with past income shocks

FEWS classifies these populations according to an assessed degree of food insecurity, as follows

Extremely food insecure populations have depleted their asset base to such a degree that without immediate outside assistance they will face famine. This scenario requires immediate food and other humanitarian assistance and long-term rehabilitation efforts designed to replenish depleted assets – livestock, seeds, tools and basic necessities of life as well as some cash income

Highly food insecure populations cannot meet their food needs during the current year without reducing consumption or drawing down assets to such a degree that they compromise their future food security. This scenario requires nutritional supplementation for vulnerable groups (usually infants, small children and pregnant or lactating mothers),

targeted food- (or cash-) for-work programs, other forms of income supplementation, or, in some cases, targeted transfer ('safety net') programs

Moderately food insecure populations can meet their food needs for the current year, but only by drawing down savings or relying heavily on secondary income activities, transfers from extended family members. Should market access or income/transfers from secondary sources be compromised, these populations might become highly food insecure in the current year. No interventions are required, but vigilant monitoring of such situations are necessary. Even modest further downturns in the fortunes of populations in this category can quickly deplete meager resources and stocks and cause them to descend into the highly food insecure category.

Relatively food secure populations can meet their food needs in the current year without altering normal income activities or depleting savings. Even here, however, monitoring is important. Insect infestations, washouts of transport links, ethnic conflicts and a host of other factors can quickly turn seemingly food secure situations into food insecure situations.

Often, it is not absolute vulnerability that is at issue, rather it is changes in vulnerability status being experienced (or projected to be experienced) by population groups at the sub-national level. To interpret such changes and the impact on relative vulnerability, requires first the establishment of a 'baseline' or 'normal' vulnerability situation and to monitor periodically (normally on an annual basis, but in some circumstances more frequently) changes in the indicator levels which taken together denote overall vulnerability.

There have developed over the past decade at least three basic approaches to vulnerability assessments: i) The FEWS 'indicator' approach which has historically inferred conditions at the household level through an area-level analysis, ii) the FEWS income accounting/commodity denominator approach and iii) the Save the Children Fund/UK (SCF) approach based on a 'food economy' model.

The latter approach to 'risk mapping' attempts to develop an understanding of the 'food economy' of various strata of higher, middle, and lower income households within 'food economy zones' which are generally homogeneous in their livelihood characteristics. Much of the information is gained through field-based, semi-structured interviews of key informants at different levels of the communities' econo-politico-social structure. This information is then synthesized into SCF's 'RiskMap' database software program which is based on an explicit model of household **food** access and household and market responses in times of stress. The model can then be subjected to sensitivity analysis (e.g. food production losses through drought) to yield estimates of impact on household food income for each of the wealth types of households. This is a 'bottom-up' approach which extends an understanding of local economies upward to develop a picture of the region or country.⁸

⁸ This analysis and that in the following paragraph are taken from "Summary Report: Second Informal Meeting on Methodology for Vulnerability Assessment, December 9-10, 1996" (FAO/GIEWS, Rome)

The primary indicators traditionally used in the FEWS approach include remotely sensed data, official statistics reported by the government's data and information gathering organizations (as normally 'ground-truthed' by FEWS) and other information for which there is a sufficiently broad area of coverage. Generally, the FEWS data are 5-15 year time series – sufficient to establish a generalized baseline situation and suggest trends. The conceptual model of household behavior is generally similar to that used by SCF. Because these data are continuous (the 'baseline' is established in the initial VA and updated in annual 'current' VAs for each country), they can serve to develop a gradation of vulnerability from high to low, as well as vulnerability under current conditions. This has generally been regarded as a 'top down' approach. In its application, this FEWS approach has been modified or adapted to fit the individual country situation. The World Food Program's VAM (Vulnerability Assessment Mapping) approach has tended to take pieces from both the SCF and FEWS models and apply them on a country-by-country basis depending on the types of data and household survey capacities available. All three organizations (and a number of NGOs, as well) constantly cross-fertilize methodologically and cooperate increasingly on a country-by-country basis.

Over the past two years, FEWS has been adjusting its VA paradigm. As the Evaluation Team was informed in one of its first meetings with FEWS/W staff, FEWS has been moving from its original concern for measuring vulnerability to famine to the much more subtle art of vulnerability to food insecurity. The more recent VAs have added sections which deal with issues of livelihood security, coping and adaptation strategies and food market performance to the existing analysis of food production and availability and resultant food balance sheets. Recent draft guidance from FEWS/W incorporates SCF-like concepts of food economies and household livelihoods. In perhaps the most interesting VA done to date – this one undertaken jointly with the government's VAM Committee and WFP – FEWS/Malawi and its colleagues were able to gain access to huge stores of government-collected data which, until that time, had not been made available outside the Malawian government. With so much data available, the VA was able to develop GIS maps showing vulnerability indices against several major variables – poverty, food deficiency, malnutrition and a composite index. While there has been a somewhat lively debate about the methodology, the most important aspect of this particular VA is that the assessment is being used by the government, WFP, NGOs, the World Bank and other donors to target various forms of assistance to the most vulnerable EPAs. While VAs in other countries are also increasingly being used in combination with other methods for targeting, the Malawi case stands out in this regard in terms of the number of government, donor and NGO organizations using the VA for targeting significant amounts of assistance – perhaps a premonition of things to come for increasingly well-fashioned vulnerability assessments.

A principal purpose of vulnerability assessments is to identify groups and areas needing careful food needs assessments. Properly done, as noted above, vulnerability assessments enable donors to target relief, rehabilitation or development resources on groups which are most vulnerable. Done as part of a preparedness and mitigation strategy, assistance to the most vulnerable groups intended to reduce that vulnerability can not only engender the near-term payoff of increased food security, it can help create a sustainable system where longer-term development programs can follow the lead, in terms of targeting, of the shorter-term mitigation activities.

FEWS has held several workshops for its own field staff and for non-FEWS staffs of government agencies and NGOs on vulnerability assessment methodology. A recent workshop was held on qualitative methodologies and their use in vulnerability assessments. The use of market prices data and information gathered from interviews with traders and transporters were also covered. All VAs are now prepared with a common FEWS 'look and feel' to their structure, while remaining country-specific in their content. In southern Africa, further work on a common design of VAs has been undertaken by FEWS/SADC to allow for better comparisons within the region. VAs have been done, or are planned, for several Southern African countries where there are no resident FEWS personnel. These have been undertaken by the national EW units in, for example, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia with assistance from visiting FEWS RFFPs. The recently completed Lesotho VA follows the approach outlined in the handbook for regional Early Warning Units by FEWS/SADC entitled "Vulnerability Analysis for SADC Countries: A Suggested Approach for Early Warning Units". It is a planned first part of what will eventually become a two-stage vulnerability assessment. The second-stage will assess historical patterns of food insecurity in Lesotho. This two-stage approach is likely to become standard for all FEWS-designed VAs in countries where conditions (and datasets) allow.

In Kenya, monthly Vulnerability Updates are enabling continual comparisons against the original 1995 baseline. Plans are underway to update the baseline shortly to accord with Kenya's redrawing of District boundaries. WFP food aid has been targeted in Kenya using the 1995 VA and the monthly updates. The first Uganda VA was completed recently and plans are underway for a VA in Rwanda.

In the Sahel, vulnerability assessments are carried out annually, often following post-harvest assessments. In all five countries they closely follow the format in the "FEWS Current Vulnerability Assessment Outline, Technical Guidance and Mechanic Manual, (May, 1998)". In this region, the VAs have tended to be conducted by the FEWS staff on their own with occasional involvement of government EW or Food Security staff. WFP has not been as fully involved in the FEWS VA process as in Southern Africa, although they maintain a regional VAM officer in Ouagadougou who appears willing to assume a more proactive role in the near future.

The case of Zambia is another interesting example. Although the *use* of the Zambia vulnerability assessment is, for the moment, less clear than in Malawi, the *content* is particularly well-knit and articulated. It, in effect, brings the VA process together in a near perfect blend of cooperation and clear exposition. In this example, the FEWS representatives worked very closely with the government's Food Health and Nutrition Information System (FHANIS), Ministry of Agriculture (MAFF) and Meteorological Department, FAO, WFP, the NGO umbrella organization, Program Against Malnutrition (PAM), and other members of the VAM Technical Steering Committee in the "1997 Zambia Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping Report: an Analysis of Normal and Current Food Security Conditions". The structure of the VA closely follows the FEWS framework and relies on remotely sensed data and on-the-ground production, market price and household income data. In many ways this VA has all the characteristics one would want to find in the 'perfect' VA: i) close collaboration among all the actors, ii) a nice merging of remotely sensed and on-the-ground data, iii) the use of market and income data, concisely summarized and enriched with tables and GIS maps, iv) district (level 3) comparability rather than the more

normal (for Zambia) provincial (level 2) comparisons, and v) a clear summary and sense of ‘what next’ The summary statement is worth noting because it reflects food security trends which, to a greater or lesser degree, characterize the situation for vulnerable groups in much of semi-arid Africa

“Across Zambia, in every district of the country, most people are less able to cope with shocks to food security than they were during the normal period (1985-1995) Generally, there have been reductions in total disposable income in all the districts, depicting negative percentage changes for the last decade This situation is also generally true when looking at rural households It is evident from these results that, in general, most people (at least 96 percent) in the country are much below the required minimum food basket”

The VA baseline assessment has enabled the detection of consumption trends in recent years at variance with those during the baseline period The baseline years are characterized by extremely high per capita consumption of maize products – presumably because many layers of producer and consumer subsidies on inputs, production, marketing, milling and consumption made maize an unsustainably ‘cheap’ food With the elimination of subsidies and resultant, increasing maize meal prices, the consumption of non-maize products, particularly roots and tubers appears to be returning to levels of the 1960s and 1970s The VA has helped researchers understand that decreases in maize consumption per se are not necessarily a signal of deteriorating, longer-term food security and may, in fact, be a return to a more economically sustainable consumption pattern

How the Zambia VA is being utilized is unclear Part of the reason is the continuing reverberation of major government retrenchments, particularly in the agriculture sector government organizations While WFP uses the VA to help target its food assistance, other levels of targeting are required below the provincial level before the VA can be as helpful in this regard as it is in Malawi The same is likely to be true for the World Bank’s Social Action Fund (SAF) activities the VA, if it contained data with sub-district level validity, could be of considerable benefit in focusing SAF resources on the most vulnerable or most food insecure communities

FHANIS, with FEWS assistance, has also conducted several household-level vulnerability-oriented appraisals and, on the basis of the results of these surveys, has determined that, while the VA findings hold for district-level analysis, the situation for some groups at the sub-district level have been found to be much worse Presently, FHANIS monitoring (again with FEWS help) is being extended into urban areas

Zambia, with a population nearly 50 percent urban, has the highest urbanization rate in tropical Africa An analysis of the vulnerability to serious food insecurity among the poorer deciles of the urban population is particularly important in being able to determine the effects of liberalization on the urban formal and informal sector labor force

Thus, in Zambia, the FEWS staff, consisting of two Zambian professionals (one of whom is funded under a USAID buy-in) with intermittent assistance from the RFFR in Harare, have managed to participate fully with an international consortium of food security-related professionals and the government’s own food security infrastructure to produce analysis and conclusions of high consequence This has been based on generating sound conclusions from the

acquisition of large and diverse amounts of fairly good data and using FEWS-developed analytical methodologies – concerted with methodologies developed by FAO/WFP and local organizations – to underpin conclusions and recommendations based on the data and clearly stated as to implications

FEWS' country VAs are made available to a wide set of users. In virtually all cases the underlying datasets are also available to all interested persons at the local FEWS office which often maintain the most complete food security databases in the country. For users in other parts of the world there is as yet no way to access VA data, risk maps compiled from the data, or the reports themselves, except by direct query to FEWS/W. The Evaluation Team, in the Recommendations Section below, proposes that the VA reports be made available on the FEWS website.

A substantial number of workshops and training sessions on VA methodology have been held – some involving just FEWS staff, some involving FEWS and government/NGO practitioners and some focused on non-FEWS personnel. These workshops have occurred in all three regions. As is the case with African government personnel who have received EW training and TA, there has been a high turnover rate among those trained in VA methodology necessitating the need for continual training.

One aspect of vulnerability assessments that requires additional comment is the issue of whether all the important indicators in a particular country are being monitored, particularly indicators of deterioration in chronic factors. There is, in this regard, a dimension of asset depletion or attenuation (i.e. the conversion of productive asset to consumables at a rate greater than the long-term pace of asset accumulation) that is of concern, because there may be cases of quite serious adverse food security consequences as yet unmeasured in the present applications of VA methodology. There are country-specific, or generic dimensions of vulnerability assessment that need – on a country by country or regional basis – to be considered for inclusion of vulnerability assessments. An example came to light during the Team's visit to Malawi.

In Malawi, the Team was advised by a respected agronomist that a major problem developing in the smallholder subsistence agriculture sector is the deteriorating nutrient base in soils that have not been fertilized for several years and which have been actively cultivated – without fallow – for many years continuously. The term he used to describe the situation was 'mining the nitrogen'. By this, he meant that the soil's normal load of nitrogen had been depleted, in part because the old system of replacing nitrogen with nitrogenous fertilizers was no longer being employed (due to the elimination of fertilizer subsidies and rising fertilizer costs). Generally, traditional agronomic practices tend not to rotate nitrogen-fixing plants, and hence nitrogen, into the soils. This configuration of factors has contributed to substantial decreases in annual cereals yields in the last year or two. The nitrogen depletion is now gaining momentum, as the residual nitrogen is fully used up. The agronomist regards the 1997/98 yield downturns in maize and other cereals – in a year of fairly good rainfall in Malawi – as a clear sign that both per capita and total production of cereals is going to decline dramatically in the years ahead in Malawi – a country already among Africa's least food secure.

The issue for FEWS, and for all organizations engaged in vulnerability assessments, is that, were this diagnosis to prove accurate, FEWS probably ought to be aware of, and reporting on, deteriorating soil fertility as a significant – perhaps a major – factor contributing to increasing household vulnerability to the adverse impact of drought (or as an adverse event in its own right) needing to be factored into the analysis of vulnerability causality. The kinds of questions raised include: how can such a trend be measured? As there are no funds in the government's budget for soils analysis, who would cover the costs? Where would the expertise come from to do the actual testing? If it is nitrogen loss today, will there be another factor tomorrow? and who will cover the costs of tracking it and the others to follow? The most important issue which can only be raised, but not answered, in this Evaluation is it FEWS' responsibility to uncover whether nitrogen losses are a major contributor to household food insecurity? If so, to report on it? To add it to the set of indicators being tracked in Malawi and, possibly elsewhere? If the answers are affirmative, how does FEWS go about this task? How far does the quest for causality lead?

As a result of the 1996 World Food Summit, FAO has taken the lead in an effort to institutionalize Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS) at the national level where serious food insecurity exists. In June, 1998, FAO and other members of the Committee on World Food Security (CWFS) presented draft guidelines detailing the background to FIVIMS and presenting the principles to guide its operations, once it has been established. As part of this Evaluation, the Team Leader met with staff of FAO's Food Security Division in Rome to review FIVIMS' objectives, status and next steps in order to determine its potential impact on the country EW and VA units in the African countries where FEWS is and/or will be operational. The concern in this Evaluation and for FEWS is the potential for both positive and negative impact on FEWS' effectiveness and efficiency.

It is clear that those in FAO/Rome, who view themselves as a 'secretariat' for the FIVIMS development process see the future FIVIMS as a helpful addition to the efforts already underway in food insecure countries to better understand and cope with food insecurity causality. Presently, some twenty months after the World Food Summit, the FIVIMS effort is still at the stage of obtaining agreement by the governments represented in the CWFS to the overall operating principles and the objectives of the organization. The Third draft was tabled in June, 1998 and reactions are still awaited. Once the background statement and guiding principles are approved, operating procedures and a timetable of where and when FIVIMS will begin operations will still need to be developed. Thus, FIVIMS is not yet in sufficiently concrete form to enable an outside judgment on what it will do, where, and how. This makes it a practical impossibility, at this time, to judge its future impact on FEWS' operations. Suffice to say on this point that it is unlikely that FIVIMS will be operational on more than a pilot basis before the terminal date of FEWS III in 1999⁹. Whatever its effect, said effect would occur largely during the period of any FEWS follow-on.

The FAO staff described the future operating modality of FIVIMS in any given country as, first, diagnosis of the quality of information gathering, analysis, reporting and programmatic activities related to that country's food insecurity problems, second, preparation of a FIVIMS action plan addressing the voids, third, securing financing for the proposed FIVIMS program in that country.

⁹ FIVIMS/FAO is, however, operational, on a pilot basis, in a small region of Eastern DRC.

and, fourth, implementation. If there is a danger here, and there is no certainty that there would be problems, it would occur if the FIVIMS approach were to be viewed as subverting efforts of other food security-oriented programs (such as FEWS), e.g. attempting to move them toward FIVIMS-determined objectives at variance from their own. FIVIMS declares itself to be 'country-driven' not FAO-driven. The staff in Rome emphasized its cooperative and collegial nature. At this point, there is no reason to see FIVIMS as anything but helpful in the long run – assuming, of course, that it is approved, starts operation and is able to secure financing for its program proposals.

2 Evaluative Comments on Vulnerability Assessments in FEWS III

FEWS recently celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its first vulnerability assessment. Earlier FEWS VAs dealt with vulnerability to famine. Now the assessments look at vulnerability to experiencing food insecurity. Further, the realm of what needs to be looked at when focusing on food security has expanded to the point where increasingly it is *livelihood* security that is investigated in order to get at the real set of constraints preventing higher levels of *food* security. Under FEWS II, VAs were regularly done, but with quite varying methodologies. Now, increasingly the methodologies are coalescing into reports with a FEWS 'look and feel' but remaining country-specific.

There are several players in the VA arena. WFP, with its VAM unit, is not only conceptually close to the FEWS methodology, it seems to be comfortable in a partnership with FEWS, in countries where both organizations jointly participate in the preparation of VAs. Save the Children (UK) is another of the VA pioneers and was, perhaps, the first organization to deal with the concept of risk mapping and vulnerability mapping. They still tend to do their work separately, using a much stronger community base and a decidedly local focus to their work. It is more quantitative, RRA-style work, but it is important, particularly as a ground-truthing entity. There has been increasing cooperation between all three organizations as all have begun to realize the importance to each of them of using the methods and results obtained under the others' approaches.

A problem with VA work as it is currently being done by FEWS/WFP is that its applicability in terms of programming and targeting is at the district – or third – administrative level. That is still too coarse a filter for most resource-targeting purposes. One administrative level lower – at the fourth, or sub-district, level – would provide a much better targeting tool. The joint GOM/WFP/FEWS vulnerability assessment for Malawi, which identified the most vulnerable EPAs (of which there are 154), has proved a much better tool for targeting and has had the most impressive response from the donors and government, in terms of targeting of all vulnerability assessments done to date. Ethiopia, which has begun doing vulnerability assessments at the fourth (*wereda*) administrative level also looks to gain positive donor response as a result. The USAID capacity-building project with DPPC (described below) can only help to improve the government's ability to help donors target their recovery, rehabilitation and development resources more precisely in the future.

In summary, as a direct result of FEWS' decade of efforts in the VA area, its willingness to share its methodologies with others, to cooperate with differing approaches, its having continually

refined and improved the design of vulnerability assessment to better merge with EW information and its established ability to report on and disseminate information about food insecurity status and causality, it can be viewed as a, if not the, most important force in moving vulnerability assessment to the fore as a major tool of analysis and resources targeting

E. Improving Response Planning

1 Description and Discussion

Response Planning was described by one FEWS/W officer as the ultimate deliverable. It would be an appropriate answer to the question “what purpose is served by all the data collection and analysis FEWS undertakes?” The answer being “the analysis leads to action – better, more appropriate, more timely, and less costly action to reduce food insecurity and increase the ability of vulnerable populations to ward off both chronic and acute causes of famines.” This section of the Evaluation Report attempts to describe and analyze FEWS-generated results which can be identified as better, more, or more timely ‘response planning’ by African governments, NGOs and donors than would have been the case in the absence of FEWS III.

The terms of reference which have guided preparation of this Evaluation Report ask the Team to look at where and in what ways FEWS’ Early Warning and Vulnerability Analyses and FEWS reports are being used by the various ‘stakeholders’ in identifying effective strategies, policies and programs for i) responding to identified famine threats, ii) preventing, mitigating and responding to short-term threats to food security, iii) strengthening technical competencies and strategy development capabilities, iv) improving the development of food delivery options to be ready well ahead of the arrival of shocks, v) promoting understanding of ‘self-targeting approaches’ operating within the context of market and food aid responses, and vi) promoting coordination among all organizations attempting to improve the overall response capabilities of the ‘system’ of government, donor, NGOs and private entities.

In short, this Report now attempts to determine, within the limits of the information at hand, how these organizations have made use of FEWS’ outputs to be better able than they were before the advent of the project to respond to shocks and to offset the factors amplifying the level of household adversity they generate.

FEWS’ early warning-related outputs have included both data gathering and the training of others in data gathering techniques. They have included improving and more sophisticated modes of data analysis and interpretation and the training of others in those modes. They have included FEWS’ vulnerability assessment outputs and the training of others in the various techniques of VA preparation. Has all this enabled, in any discernable fashion, unproved capability on the part of governments, NGOs and donors to respond better – faster, more effectively, at lower cost – because of having improved their capacity to *plan* such responses? Have preparedness and mitigation strategies entered their lexicons?

The short answer, based on more than three hundred interviews, a review of all quarterly progress reports, R4 reporting, FEWS *Bulletins*, country monthly reports, VAs, handbooks and manuals, much other FEWS-generated material, and the country analyses prepared by the individual members of the Evaluation Team is yes some

A longer, more nuanced, answer is probably more useful and insightful however, for reasons largely exogenous to the FEWS project, not as much improvement in response planning has occurred as was needed, or as might have been hoped. There are a few examples of good effort in this domain and these are presented in the following paragraphs. One wishes, however, that there had been more. The reasons that there are not more countries which seem to have developed improved response planning capacities originate, in large part, from the now familiar array of problems cited earlier in this report: high personnel turn-over, poor incentive structures, lack of budget resources, and policy-makers who are still unconvinced by arguments that famine, drought or food insecurity response planning should command higher priority attention – *their* attention – than it does.

The 1997/98 El Niño event, however, provided a sense of what *can* happen where there is a concerted effort to prepare for a major, well publicized, (in this case, much feared) approaching disaster. The governments, donors and NGOs in most countries in Southern Africa became concerned that a serious calamity might be visited upon them by unprecedented warming of the surface of a far-away ocean and they, for the most part, energized themselves to prepare for what became known as the “ENSO event”. From early 1996 through early 1997, climatological models were suggesting a high probability of below-normal rainfall in much of Southern Africa, with flooding a possibility in other parts of the region. The FEWS staff provided meteorological updates constantly throughout the period, hosted workshops, provided country-specific advisory services and participated in numerous working groups and committees devoted to preparation and mitigation strategies.

The worst predictions of adverse impact from the 1997/98 ENSO (El Niño southern oscillation) event did not eventuate in Southern Africa, although there were sub-regional drought conditions and, in some places, such as Northern Zambia, flooding. For most of the region, however, rainfall was within ‘normal’ parameters. While there has been some ex post grumbling about having undertaken so much preparation for an event that was ‘tame’ compared to predictions, the more important point, insofar as FEWS is concerned, is that the ‘system’ worked. The early warning information was transmitted. The governments, donors and NGOs organized themselves to use the information as effectively as they could. Extensive cooperation among all the actors in most of the potentially affected countries was the norm. The lesson here is that preparedness planning is possible in many if not most of these countries – if the leadership senses the importance of doing so. FEWS was instrumental in providing information and advice that was sufficiently convincing to command the level of attention necessary. The challenge for the future is in further convincing the leadership in food insecure countries that there is much response planning to be done, even in years without an El Niño. Unfortunately, if the experience of recent years is any guide, it seems difficult to command the needed level of attention in years lacking a

headline-grabbing scare story¹⁰ This issue is taken up again in the Recommendations Section below

Perhaps the clearest example of FEWS contribution to response planning is support provided by FEWS' participation in the design of the new USAID/Ethiopia \$3.7 million Strengthening Emergency Response Capabilities Project. This grew out of an institutional strengthening effort initiated by FEWS in the DPPC, using a small cache (initially \$50,000 which eventually grew to \$100,000) of left-over PD&S (project design and support) funds which the then Mission Director agreed could be used in a Limited Scope Grant Agreement to help strengthen the relationship between two key units (the EW Unit and the Policy and Planning Unit) of DPPC, Ethiopia's huge disaster preparedness and response organization. These funds were used to do pilot studies on VA methodology, to hold a VA workshop and to provide computer equipment for both units. To that time, the early warning and policy and planning units in DPPC had been operating conceptually as if in two separate worlds. Designing the strengthening of DPPC's vulnerability assessment capability to operate simultaneously in both units brought them together on VA topics and enabled them to discover the utility of working more closely together in all aspects of DPPC's activities. This change in internal operating procedures in DPPC, in turn convinced USAID that efforts to strengthen DPPC institutionally could have a substantial pay-off and led, eventually, to the design of the bilateral Response Strengthening Project.

There are a large number of specific examples of FEWS' influence in promoting response planning, largely through the provision of reports, data and other information which those charged with responding to famines, disasters and severe household food insecurity have put to use.

- FEWS Early Warning reporting in 1996 led to a USAID/Ethiopia decision to import 20,000 MT of food aid. FEWS reviewed all distribution plans and made recommendations for geographic targeting and allocations.
- FEWS/SA developed an ENSO information packet for distribution to NEWUs in Southern Africa and initiated an El Niño task force for the region. Participated in ad hoc SADC El Niño meetings. Chaired donor-NGO-Ministry of Agriculture meeting in Zimbabwe to develop drought mitigation strategies for agriculture.
- WFP/Malawi used the FEWS/WFP VA as the primary device to guide the targeting of its assistance to the most food insecure EPAs.
- Several donors and NGOs used 1996/97 FEWS/Kenya analysis and recommendations for relief and mitigation interventions.
- FEWS/Rwanda highlighted the potential negative effects of food inflow in response to the massive return of refugees in Nov/Dec 1996 sparking an assessment by FAO, WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture and FEWS on the impact of food aid for 1.2 million people.

¹⁰ The role of the press was important in spreading both information and conjecture.

- USAID and the EU used the FEWS/Zimbabwe VA and FEWS/Southern Africa briefings to determine whether and in which places food and money would be provided for relief in Zimbabwe
- FEWS/Kenya participated in a working group that included the Kenyan private sector, the Kenyan Association of Manufacturers, and donors that was assembled to advise the government of Kenya on food policy formulation
- FEWS/Mozambique and FEWS/SA have been deeply involved in Mozambican efforts to develop a food security strategy and a disaster preparedness plan
- FEWS has become an authoritative voice in Kenya (this may also be due to the collective impact of the four programs housed there) by i) consolidating diverse sources of information to highlight emerging issues, ii) presenting it in an attractive and user-friendly way that can be easily understood, and iii) a regular and objective output that many users have come to rely on for its consistency and credibility

As one official in Kenya's Office of the President told the Evaluation Team "In comparison with the response capacity in Kenya during the 1991 drought, when the early warning was not in place, in 1996-97, the time taken to get interventions to people was cut in half. In 1991, it was difficult to get governments and NGOs to respond. In 1996-97, the government declared an emergency much earlier than in 1991."

2 Evaluative Comments on FEWS III Response Planning

This is the most difficult area to evaluate, because it has been hard to determine how well governments, particularly, but also NGOs and donors, are doing in improving their ability to respond, not only to famine emergencies, but also to the chronic factors contributing to serious food insecurity. Further, even if the Team were in a position to compare more recent responses to previous responses, how much of the improvement could be attributed to FEWS interventions? The best direct quote we received was from the officer in Kenya's Office of the President, cited above, who stated that FEWS support to Kenya's early warning unit had enabled the government to cut the response time to the 1996/97 drought to half that of the 1991 drought.

The experience in Southern Africa with the ENSO event provides insight into the impact of FEWS on response planning. In this situation, both the SADC regional organization and most of the governments of the region galvanized into early preparations for the anticipated drought. Even though the widely advertised scenario did not, for the most part, occur, the evidence was clear that in advance of a perceived threat of substantial magnitude the governments, NGOs and donor governments were willing and ready to initiate preparedness planning and to cooperate on mitigation strategies. SADC's potential for playing a major and positive role in any such future calamity was readily apparent. FEWS was at the heart of this early preparedness, providing imagery, advice, workshops and strategy assistance. If there is any single event over the four year course of the FEWS III project which provides a foretaste of what *can* occur when the actors are

galvanized to action, the preparations by governments, donors and NGOs for the anticipated 1997/98 ENSO is clear evidence of the importance of FEWS in such a situation

It also points out the limits of FEWS. Because of difficulties in capacity building described elsewhere in this Report, there are not, in most FEWS countries, the number of trained technical people or administrators adequate to perform the information accumulation and synthesis tasks that FEWS has been providing. The high turnover and the lack of budgets for EW units and planning entities over the past few years, coupled with the ending of several bilateral and multilateral projects which have been providing support for these units, has effectively offset much of the training and technical assistance FEWS has provided over the 1994-98 period. Further, FEWS training and TA have been provided largely at the technician level. Aside from one-on-one professional links which some of the RFFRs and CFFRs have forged with a few senior government officials in some of the FEWS countries, there is little evidence of the types of *institutional* changes – changes in administrative behavior or decision-maker mindsets – that would signal substantive improvement in the prospects for sustainable institutional strengthening and capacity strengthening which must preface, and underwrite, significantly improved response planning on the part of the governments.

Among NGOs, there is evidence to suggest they are much better at preparedness and contingency planning than was the case a decade earlier. FEWS has contributed to this process by providing data, information and analysis which has been used by such organizations to speed their own response processes. SCF, certainly, CARE, CRS, LWF, MSF, Africare, and many other NGOs have all benefited from FEWS' operations, training, software and technical advisory services. As noted in the conclusions section, many FEWS field representatives are not reporting fully on the amount of time and effort they are devoting to working with personnel. The Team discovered there was a great deal of informal assistance being provided regularly to NGOs. In interviews with a large number of representatives of country-based NGOs the message was clear. FEWS information and support had helped them in their own internally-generated improvement and strengthening exercises and strategies. Among the results of this assistance have been improvements in response planning and response implementation.

The Ethiopia FEWS operation provided considerable input into efforts to strengthen the response planning capacities of DPPC. This involved influencing two internal units of DPPC to learn to work together toward common emergency response and food security objectives. The results were sufficiently positive that USAID/Ethiopia was convinced to develop a bilateral project to continue strengthening DPPC's response planning effort.

The overall picture, however, is that most of the governments of food insecure African countries are still not sufficiently well organized to prepare, and remain prepared, on a sustained basis, for disasters, or for confronting the longer-term causality of vulnerability. Capacity-building efforts, with the notable exceptions already noted, have not reached the policy levels in most of the involved governments. In the Team's judgment, the ability of FEWS to be a bigger influence on people at the decision and policy levels of these governments appears to be constrained by the small size of the FEWS presence in most of these countries, its relatively small influence at decision tables, and the constant, alternative demands on the time of the one or two person FEWS offices in these countries. These staff are stretched to the limit gathering data, providing

capacity-enhancing skills transfers at the technician level and attending the innumerable meetings of the various committees and task forces with which they participate or cooperate. The information they generate and the reporting they prepare, however well done and however well received at the lower levels of these governments and in the donor and NGO communities, has not, to date, galvanized senior government officials in most of these countries to improve their governments' preparedness for disasters, nor, effectiveness in reducing long term causality of widespread vulnerability to food insecurity.

The regional staff in Harare working through SADC have, in the view of the Evaluation Team, hit upon an appropriate, albeit longer-term, approach under the circumstances – a focus on strengthening the SADC food security, early warning, regional remote sensing units as a means of taking some of the load off the individual governments. The locating of an OFDA regional field office in Harare is also of considerable utility in this situation. Response planning in individual countries is greatly abetted by the availability of technical and other advisory assistance from a regional organization not only composed of nationals of the region, but fully financed by the member governments. The FEWS regional office in Harare acts in all ways as if it were an internal unit of SADC. This is working very well in terms of strengthening SADC itself as a purveyor of quality information, advice and backstopping – just what is needed in gradually moving the member governments themselves toward better response planning. There seems to have been some pay-offs already in Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho and Zambia. There is some progress in Malawi.

The other regional organizations, AGRHYMET and IGAD, have been less a force in their respective regions for improved national response planning than has SADC. AGRHYMET's mandate makes of it more purely a collector and purveyor of agro-meteorological information than a provider of skills, policy advice and leadership in developing national response planning for its member Sahelian governments. This could change, conceivably, and an AGRHYMET more forcefully interjecting advice and guidance with its quite good agro-meteorological information and technical training could be the appropriate regional instrument to move Sahelian countries toward better response planning. This theme is picked up in the Recommendations section below. IGAD is still too weak, too peripheral and too diffuse in its regional responsibilities to provide the leadership in this area. As is discussed in the Conclusions section, consideration should also be given to the use of the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI) or similar regional training center in Eastern Africa to provide the impetus to policy makers in the Greater Horn Region toward improved response planning.

Notwithstanding limited evidence of significant progress in many countries of unproved, sustainable response planning, the availability of more and better information is having another effect that is increasingly important. The visibility, and more ready availability, of increasing amounts of information of improving quality about local crop conditions, about producer, wholesale and retail market prices and, about cross border flows, about the location of vulnerable populations and the changing status of, and reasons for, their vulnerability and about other aspects of food insecurity is serving to reduce the ability of politicians to 'diddle the numbers', or to generate fictitious food needs requirements as had common in many African countries in the past.

Where before, response planning in many places consisted of internal meetings on how to build the best possible case to present to the donors for the highest possible levels of food aid, in at least some countries, the process is now more attuned to pulling together the best possible evidence to support a plan of action in which the government, donors, NGOs and, increasingly, private businesses are better informed and collaborating on responses. While progress has been halting and sometimes slow, there has been significant progress nonetheless – based, to a very great extent on the availability of more and better information. The issue for USAID and for FEWS is how to insure that the process continue so that it *will* lead, eventually, to substantial improvement in response planning. There are no easy solutions, or quick fixes. The process, however viewed, is long-term.

Overall, the major benefit, in terms of improved response planning, stemming from the first four years of FEWS III efforts has been to make better information more widely available enabling decision-makers in African governments and in the donor and NGO communities (and, of course, in USAID itself), to initiate advance preparations sooner and to achieve better targeting of resources. With more and better advance preparations and more precise targeting, theoretically, comes cost savings (of sometimes enormous proportions). To know that 200,000 people are affected in 10 districts of a country is obviously better than assuming, on the basis of less precise information, that as many as 500,000 people might be affected in 20 or 30 districts. When there are conflicting estimates – as there almost always are – FEWS field staff and their reporting have become arbiters in most cases – the most listened-to source of information. How well this 'best available' information has been used to reduce the costs of responding to emergencies is much more difficult to establish. In terms of gross estimates of whether financial resources spent on FEWS are more than offset by the cost savings to donors, governments, and NGOs in being enabled to have a longer response time or in responding in a more targeted fashion the answer is clear. FEWS continues to pay for itself many times over. Numerous respondents said just that to the Team in one form or another.

This is likely to remain the case as long as there are serious instances of severe food deprivation and famines in Africa, especially as the numbers of people who are at risk continue to grow. The numbers of Kenyans in Eastern and Central Provinces who were being provided US food during the major 1984/85 drought numbered two million. In order to provide imported food for them during that crisis the government and donor community sequestered every available railcar and contracted for every available long-haul truck in the country. It was a close call. Had not the long rains of 1985 arrived on time, it was quite likely that there would not have been adequate transport facilities to move food for that size population. Today, if the same drought situation were to emerge in exactly the same areas of Kenya, more than four million Kenyans would be at risk and there are questions about the capacity of transport in Kenya to move food for that number.¹¹

¹¹ A member of the Evaluation Team was the in-country coordinator for the US response to the 1984-85 drought.

Under these types of circumstances, in view of continued weaknesses in EW systems in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, and having reviewed the alternative EW systems such as GIEWS, AGRHYMET, SADC and individual country systems, the Evaluation Team overwhelmingly concludes that FEWS is still needed in order to provide the best and most comprehensive information to guide response planning. For the foreseeable future there is no acceptable alternative.

How FEWS can generate improved and/or speeded local response has been best demonstrated by the preparation for the El Niño event among the **SADC** member countries. The Team surmises that the data gathering and analysis efforts undertaken by FEWS field staff and their counterparts (many of whom have received training under FEWS 111) will yield similar results in countries in this and the other regions in the eventuality of a similar large-scale, extremely adverse event. The interviewee in Kenya who cited a halving of government response time between the 1991 and 1996 droughts and attributed that improvement to FEWS' efforts could probably have been speaking for virtually any of the countries in the three regions where FEWS has been operating.

USAID will have to weight the value of the benefits of speeded and more targeted response **as** well as the utility to its country programs of better reporting about the magnitude of food insecurity in Africa against the costs of maintaining a 35-45 person FEWS team for several years to come. The Team concludes that, over the long term the value of the former will exceed the cost of the latter several-fold.

1 FEWS is doing well what USAID has asked of it

The Evaluation Team's principal – and overriding – conclusion is that FEWS is doing well what it has been asked by USAID to do, under sometimes quite difficult circumstances

Based upon the more than **300** interviews conducted during May and June, **1998** and reviews of all FEWS quarterly reports, vulnerability assessments, a random sample of country monthly reporting, the FEWS *Bulletin*, Special Reports, handbooks, manuals, FEWS-developed software and the FEWS website, the Evaluation Team has concluded that the FEWS III staffs in Washington, and in the regional and country offices have done an outstanding job in delivering accurate and credible information on a great many of the factors presaging famine and impinging on household food security. Further, it has expanded the number of vulnerability assessments being prepared on a regular basis and improved their intrinsic quality and usefulness. It has sought to work collaboratively with all other participants in the data and information collection business in sub-Saharan Africa. In all this FEWS III has succeeded to a remarkable degree.

The 'difficult circumstance' phrase in the Team's first conclusion refers to the continuing difficulty in securing statistically adequate data from country organizations peopled by staff who are – in virtually every single one of the countries under review – under-funded, under-trained, inadequately supported, unable to travel, poorly equipped and, as a result, under-motivated. From Niger to Uganda to Zambia and Zimbabwe, all the evaluation sub-teams found a similar distressing picture of low – often declining – national capacity to collect good data in statistically valid ways and to analyze it expeditiously and to transmit it on a timely basis for upstream review and compression into readable and relevant reporting. This was true for crop surveillance, meteorological data, livestock surveys, nutritional surveillance and monitoring and for household expenditure surveys. While this can be abetted to a certain extent by qualitative surveys, rapid assessments and FEWS 'eye-balling,' the situation does not bode well for improving reliability in forecasting changes in food security status or in projecting famine conditions.

While this does not mean that FEWS is less capable than before in detecting the existence of conditions leading to famine, it does signal a serious lack of progress in improving data gathering and food security forecasting and increasing the sustainability of the systems. FEWS has been forced to rely on what it refers to as 'a convergence of poor data indicators' to determine changes in primary contributing factors. Put simply, if lots of poor indicators are signaling the same trend, the chances are pretty good that such a trend is underway. This means that FEWS field reps must be constantly aware of, and collecting, large numbers of qualitative, impressionistic information and stitching it together into what seems to be the best portrayal of the food security situation in the area, or among the population, under review. How much better the situation would be if national-level agencies were able to improve the quality of the data and refine the list of indicators used. The continuing weakness of national EW and VA capabilities greatly increases the difficulty of the task for FEWS – at all levels.

2 FEWS' reporting is the best available

Almost without exception, the interviewees both within USAID and in governments, NGOs and other donor agencies told the team that they regularly used FEWS outputs – whether the FEWS *Bulletin*, special reports, locally produced monthly reporting at the country level, information from FEWS databases, or FEWS-enhanced reporting from government or regional agencies – **and** found them valuable. More often than not, the respondents referred to these reports in their various forms as the best available sources of information on early warning, risk and vulnerability issues.

One variant worth commenting on in these conclusions is the situation in southern Africa, where the FEWS regional office has been operating as an internal unit of SADC. Here the circulation of FEWS' own reporting (i.e. the *Bulletin* and related reporting) has been circumscribed to a small number of recipients in order not to undercut the authoritativeness of SADC's own reports (e.g. the SADC Food Security Bulletin) which FEWS regional staff in Harare have been assisting SADC staff to produce and improve. This is **an** important capacity-building effort and the quality of timeliness of SADC reporting has not only improved significantly, it has become a source of better country situation reporting than is often available in the member countries themselves. SADC food security-related reporting has the added advantage in the region as being less influenced by local political feelings. As one interviewee in a southern African national EWU informed the team, officers in country EW units are less reticent about providing seemingly critical or negative data and analysis to the more apolitical SADC regional EW unit than in passing it upward in their own structures. A SADC Food Security Bulletin report on near-famine conditions in sub-region 'x' of country 'y' is far less likely to threaten the job of the country EW officer who has done the analysis and derived a conclusion which might embarrass the political leadership of his/her own country.

3 The Quality of FEWS Staff is uniformly high, as is motivation

The secret of why FEWS has done such a good job under such adverse conditions is no secret at all. FEWS has attracted and retained highly motivated, talented and dedicated professionals for both its field and headquarters positions. The staff is relatively small – compared to the workload required of it – but highly productive. It was readily apparent to all members of the Evaluation Team that FEWS staff are skilled, articulate, very highly motivated and extremely hard working. This would not be true were it not for at least two reasons: 1) they find the work interesting and challenging, 11) they are given a high degree of individual leeway to accomplish their **tasks** in ways they determine as the most productive and effective, based on their own assessments of individual country conditions. There is a remarkable absence of 'second-guessing' of field **staff** by headquarters **staff** and a high degree of delegation of responsibility to individual field officers.

The headquarters staff is demanding of quality products and highly willing to provide training and technical support to increase the capability of field staff to produce those products, but they do not micromanage the processes by which data are gathered or the method by which field staff compress that data into reporting. While there was a certain amount of 'carping' by some field staff about the amount of time they need to spend in preparing their bread-and-butter monthly

reports to FEWS/W, there was no sense expressed to the evaluation teams that FEWS/W was unreasonable in its demands, overbearing or unhelpful. The contrary situation was much in evidence, with FEWS providing an enormous amount of technical assistance and training to its regional and country staffs to enable them to improve their effectiveness and the quality of their outputs.

In this regard, headquarters and cooperating agency staff time was divided into work being done to: i) improve the quality of information through technical advances in Imagery, software to better interpret the Imagery, experimenting with new technologies which might prove useful in the field, such as global positioning technology married to imagery and ground observation, and the development of improved manuals and training programs, ii) improve the content, clarity and readability and utilization of FEWS principal outputs -- the *Bulletin*, Special Reports, Vulnerability Assessments, iii) briefing USAID, other USG, and other donor organizations about particular food security problem situations, and iv) managing project inputs.

4 The context of FEWS field operations seems to be worsening

The situations in which FEWS is operating in Africa are diverse and, in most cases, difficult. Over the 1994-98 period, they seem, if anything, to be getting more rather than less difficult, as characterized by declining capacities of national EW units to collect and analyze crop, livestock, price, expenditure, nutrition, trade and other data and to analyze and report on it in timely manner. Part of the problem may be that financial support to these units has traditionally been provided by FAO, the EU, USAID and other bilateral donors on a project basis and such projects have ended or are soon to end. In several of these countries, the national government have carried the entire operation of these EW systems in their development or investment rather than in their recurring budgets. As such, they were financed fully from external sources. As the time came for the governments to pick up the costs of these operations, they were, for the most part, simultaneously under IMF and World Bank strictures to reduce rather than increase current accounts expenditures. There is little if any room in declining budgets to finance activities never previously part of recurrent expenditure accounts. The Team found this to be the case in a number of southern African countries, even Mozambique, which was doing so well in other ways. The same was true in some Sahelian countries and may also be true in countries where the subject was not raised in Team interviews.

The consequence is clear. There are not now, and do not appear likely in the near future, government funds adequate to improve the financial impoverishment of EW and VA units in these countries. Budget deficits are problems writ large and seemingly eternal for most of these governments. The needs of EW and VA units -- which are often buried deep within Ministries of Agriculture -- are unlikely to receive priority attention over the needs of, say, teachers' salaries, health post operations or a number of other high priority activities -- especially those where donors are still supporting related investment budgets. There does not appear to be much likelihood that this situation will improve in most of these countries in the near term. This has important implications for FEWS, both in its ability to gather secondary data for its own reporting and for its capacity development and response planning objectives.

5 FEWS must continue into the 21st Century

The situations which gave rise to the need for FEWS in the first place are still there, as evinced by

- Ever increasing numbers of households attempting to survive and earn basic livings from subsistence and quasi-subsistence agriculture in semi-arid and rainfed Africa
- population growth rates continuing at levels higher than growth rates in agricultural production, food production, employment creation and availability of basic services
- increasing rather than decreasing amplitudes in inter-seasonal and inter-year variability in food production levels
- declining rather than increasing capabilities of the most at-risk countries to cover the costs of needed food imports, especially since the overall gap between nutritional food needs in these countries and the level of food actually being produced is increasing
- a lack of adequate resources to gather and interpret data about these trends

Alternative, country-level EW systems able to fill in for what FEWS has been doing do not exist, and are not likely to exist in most of the at-risk countries for at least a decade, if then. Country and Regional EW systems are not capable of producing the level and quality of information currently being collected, analyzed and published by FEWS. Even in those countries (e.g. Mali and Ethiopia) and regions (**SADC**) where the EW units are larger, better financed, or have had greater experience than most EWs in Africa, the ability to prepare timely and credible reporting on a sustained basis is not robust. There continue to be serious problems of domestic financing and a lack of a sustainable staff training system and unbiased reporting and of conclusions free from politically-motivated influence or manipulation.

The FAO FIVIMS program could make a difference over time, but has been slow out of the gate, and, for the moment, seems oriented toward clarifying its purpose rather than establishing how it would operate. Most importantly, it does not come with funding. Donors will have to be convinced to finance its individual country EWNA-strengthening proposals. There is also the EU's FEWS-type program (RESAL), which is scheduled to be launched in September, 1998, under which Brussels is to finance food security research and information-gathering activities for use by EU member countries. It is not known how this will interact with FEWS and other players already on the scene in countries where RESAL is likely to be active. It does not appear to be a program likely to feature financing to enable at-risk countries to improve their food security-related data collecting and analysis capabilities, but this should be investigated.

What USAID needs to explore is the possibility of reaching agreement with additional donors to help cover the costs of continued FEWS operations. Since these organizations have consistently been users of FEWS' output over the years, it is reasonable to ask them to share the costs of continuing FEWS operations in a Phase IV. The World Bank, for example, might be able to finance the capacity-building aspects and improved utilization of FEWS output by African decision-makers. The PROAGRI program in Mozambique is potentially a model of how this might work. As described to the Evaluation Team in Maputo, PROAGRI will link an improved agricultural information system with all major players in agriculture in Mozambique. With

World Bank and other donor funding, PROAGRI will be linked to the establishment of a program management information system which will provide integration across the entire agricultural sector and tie the objectives of the sector to reducing food insecurity. A continuation of a FEWS-like activity would be an important component of the information mechanism providing feedback on effectiveness of all investments in the sector.

6 Changes in the level of field staffing are needed

The team believes that one-person FEWS country offices are inadequate to the tasks being asked of them. The combination of heavy reporting requirements and the need for ground-truthing field visits, capacity enhancements of counterparts in EW and VAM units, the constant requirements for collaboration with the local USAID and/or U.S. Embassy, other donors, NGOs and researchers plus administrative needs in difficult country situations places too heavy a time burden on one-person staffs. This burden is made even heavier in places like the Sahel, Somalia, Southern Sudan and in places where USAID missions are scheduled to phase out. The Team strongly recommends a minimum office configuration of two FEWS professional staff be established for a country presence. In countries where there is a RFFR present – such as Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Mali – a single country FEWS representative may be feasible. In countries without a regional FEWS representative and without a local USAID Mission, the minimum configuration of two AFFRs should be the absolute minimum. In any FEWS-like follow-on, the present FEWS configuration could be effectively augmented by professional personnel financed by other donors such as the EU, WFP or even the World Bank or perhaps by NGO organizations such as SCF.

Symptomatic of the problem is the situation encountered in Maputo where the relatively new (on the job now for 20 months) Mozambican AFFR is still without a 4-wheel drive vehicle. It (a Jeep Wagoneer) was purchased by FEWS/W and shipped shortly after the officer was recruited. Because the officer is a citizen of Mozambique and because there is no official bilateral agreement yet signed governing the rights and privileges of USAID project staff, the government desires to impose duties on the vehicle as they do for any private vehicle entering the country. Since FEWS has no authority to pay foreign import duties, the vehicle has been sitting in Gibraltar, incurring storage charges, for more than a year.

Sadly, no one the Team spoke with at USAID/Mozambique seemed willing to attempt to resolve the problem, to determine whether the Mozambicans might grant a waiver, determine whether the duties could be paid with local currency counterpart funds, or whether some other arrangement should be made. One Mission officer said that since the FEWS project was a USAID/W financed project it was USAID/Washington's task to deal with the issue. Suffice to say, the Evaluation Team is not sanguine about the problem being resolved anytime soon. Meanwhile the officer, who needs 4-wheel access, is forced to rent a small 2-wheel drive vehicle for in-town use and to curtail up-country visits which – in a country as drought prone as the southern half of Mozambique – is simply an inadequate solution.

Troublesome as this is, it is just one example among a multitude of daily problems with which FEWS representatives must contend. In the Sahelian FEWS posts where USAID Missions have been shuttered there is, in fact, no 'cover' for FEWS representatives who in some cases spend an

estimated 40 percent of their time on problems which are not part of their terms of reference and interfere with the discharge of their line responsibilities. This is another real-world reason the Team believes that each FEWS office must be staffed by a minimum of two persons.

7 Capacity-building efforts have been faced with problems

This is particularly true in moving beyond technical capacity enhancements and into improved utilization of information by policy level personnel and decision-makers. This outcome is not for lack of concerted and appropriate capacity-building efforts by FEWS. The organization has, in fact, been exemplary in the creative perseverance of its efforts at increasing the capacities of its counterparts in government and NGO organizations to gather and analyze data with ever-greater professionalism. The problem lies in high rates of African government staff turn-over, the lack of schemes of service in these countries which allow promotion and higher salaries for technical personnel and the low relative ranking of staff engaged in EW and VA work compared to, say, managers and policy-level personnel. Often, no sooner has someone been trained in RRA or VA field data gathering techniques or GIS mapping or the use of software to interpret satellite imagery, than that person moves on to a position in a different ministry or outside of government where he/she will not use that training. The evaluation team heard this scenario played out over and over again in all three regions.

The implications of this are several. First, the concept of undertaking a training program, individual-by-individual, simply will not work. At best, this approach is a temporary fix. The more fundamental need is for there to be an on-going, in-service training capacity within a country or a region whereby people can be trained by the system on a continuing basis. Thus, instead of FEWS personnel undertaking one-on-one or short-term group training, FEWS should participate in the development of a curriculum and of training materials and of a systematic effort in training of trainers at in-service and pre-service (universities, institutes of administration) training sites to provide basic statistics, GIS mapping, rapid rural appraisal skills, and other types of skills training required by organizations involved in field data gathering, meteorological interpretation, poverty analysis, agricultural production analysis or any of a wide range of related areas. To the extent that a food security information and analysis-oriented curriculum can be established at places like Bunda College in Malawi, Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, ESAMI in Arusha and at AGRHYMET or another regional French-language training institute in West Africa, FEWS headquarters and regional staff and/or short-term curriculum design consultants could initiate the process of transferring FEWS in-house training manuals and other materials into reusable training modules at these African sites for use in training skilled people on a continuous basis. A somewhat similar concept was at the core of the Mozambican Food Security Capacity Development Project initiated by the World Bank in 1994 where food security training modules were developed at Eduardo Mondlane University and at the Ministry of Agriculture's training institute. The considerable success of this project appears to be in part responsible for the pace at which the Mozambican government has been able to develop its Food Security and Disaster Preparedness Policies.

Secondly, the EW units which tend to be the center of attention for capacity-building endeavors themselves need to have their status within governments raised or, possibly, consideration given to moving them outside of government to university locations or, possibly to semi-autonomous

institutes supported separately by public and private user entities who would, in effect, pay for the data gathering and analysis services that such institutes could provide. The need is to attract educated and motivated staff for undertaking EW and VA work and to pay them – and otherwise motivate them sufficiently – to be able to retain their skills for periods of time measured in several years.

8 Improved response planning has not occurred at the desired rate

As best the Evaluation Team could determine, FEWS has had only modest success in most countries in generating more and better response planning. The El Niño efforts in Eastern and Southern Africa and the institutional strengthening of **DPPC** in Ethiopia eventuating in a USAID bilateral project are the two largest successes the Team was made aware of. There were also a number of cases of NGO representatives reporting improvements in their response planning capabilities attributed to FEWS assistance. There were several smaller advances which have been described earlier. Major and sustainable progress in institutionalizing response planning in governments, however, has not occurred. A part of the reason, the Evaluation Team believes, is that most FEWS field staff are fully occupied with EW and VA work (data collection, field visits and report writing), the large demands on their time occasioned by participation on a large number of food security-related committees and working groups, the regular briefing of country USAID and/or U.S. Embassy staffs, the continuing demands for informal help from the NGO and private sectors and day-to-day difficult-to-resolve administrative problems. There is little opportunity left on the calendar to interface with more difficult-to-reach senior decision-makers on issues of policy. Another reason for the lack of sustained improvement in response planning in most countries is a continuing and still perplexing lack of interest among senior decision-makers in most of these countries in assigning higher priority to better preparedness and mitigation planning. This may relate to the fact that EW and VA activities are rarely linked structurally to decision-level government entities. Most often, as described in the body of this Report, they are buried deeply in ministries of agriculture. Their reporting – to the extent it normally reaches decision-makers at all – has passed through a number of intervening staff layers and is likely to have been attenuated and distorted.

In many cases, the Team believes, local FEWS representatives – who are themselves largely technical officers – are uncomfortable in discussions of policy, which some seem to feel are outside their own areas of expertise. With the exception of two or three of the more seasoned and experienced country FEWS representatives and the six regional representatives, the CFFRs and AFFRs are probably not *yet* able to deal effectively with senior decision-makers in their host governments. This will probably change with more experience in their jobs, as has already apparently occurred among the more experienced of the country national CFFRs.

Further, save for the very serious localized famine situation in Southern **Sudan**, there were no severe emergencies confronting **any** of the countries at the time of the Team's visits. It is difficult, even in the most developed countries of the world to find much evidence of attention being paid to disaster preparedness when no disasters threaten. Most of these governments in Africa have, at least in theory, inter-ministerial or ad hoc committees which are supposed to spring into action whenever disasters threaten or occur. This was clearly the case in most of the Southern African countries during 1997 El Niño event. Suddenly, the governments, the local

news media, NGOs, donors and the common people were awash in organizing and preparations for severe drought. That the event did not produce the popularly anticipated dire consequences¹² should not detract from the fact that the agro-climatological predictions, and the plans to prepare for a possible calamity (in which FEWS played a very major and visible role), were not only securing the attention of the senior-most officers of government, but that contingencies were being put into place, preparedness was happening.

That said, there is still scant attention being paid to less visible but no less threatening events and trends which are unfolding more slowly and well outside the headlines. Neither the governments of the region or the donors are doing enough to increase the resiliency of the most vulnerable populations in confronting droughts or other future calamities which are sure to occur in the next few years.

9 Additional thinking about the role of the regional representatives is needed

While this theme is one of the major issues discussed in the Recommendations Section below, it requires some exposition as a conclusion before re-appearing as a recommendation. There are three regional organizations that are generally associated with FEWS: SADC in Harare, IGAD in Djibouti and AGRHYMET in Niamey. FEWS regional representatives sit in SADC and operate as a cooperating element within the structure. In the Horn, FEWS' regional representatives have had infrequent contact with IGAD and there appears to have been only limited attention, to date, on how to strengthen IGAD's role in early warning, vulnerability assessments, preparedness planning and capacity building associated with food security. AGRHYMET, a specialized organization under the CILSS umbrella, has responsibility for the Sahelian states in many ways similar to FEWS, except that it lacks a mandate to undertake vulnerability analysis of populations at risk of famine or severe food insecurity.

There is some overlap in the mandates of the FEWS operations in the Sahel and those of AGRHYMET. Both organizations are charged with gathering information on agro-climatology and meteorology and preparing frequent reports on the data and its implications for food insecurity and the potential for famine. Both FEWS and AGRHYMET operate information gathering and reporting activities at the country level – AGRHYMET in the nine Sahelian states and FEWS in five of them. The **appearance** of overlap at the country level was found by the Evaluation Team to be, in fact, fairly good cooperation. The institutional weaknesses in most Sahelian states create the need for substantial and sustained assistance which the combined staff strengths of FEWS and AGRHYMET are still not fully able to address. FEWS country staff – all one-person posts at present – provide technical backstopping to the local NACs in each of the countries where FEWS is resident. They help the NACs perform their functions in coordination with the country EW units. It is clearly not the case in any Sahelian country that because of the AGRHYMET mandate or presence, the FEWS representative is not needed. The task of showing up and strengthening local EW capacities and linking these data gathering and analysis capacities to their decision-making colleagues in their own governments is, by no means, complete and, realistically, will continue to be a major requirement for many years.

¹² Although what climatologists were actually forecasting was a higher probability of below normal rainfall.

At the ARC, the role which FEWS could play is helping 1) strengthen AGRHYMET's capacity to offer a *sustainable* and technically improved set of training programs for **staffs** of country EWs, 11) to add a much stronger vulnerability analysis capacity to track long-term changes in the magnitude and causes of household-level vulnerability to food insecurity and famine and, iii) to improve the ability of AGRHYMET to influence senior decision-makers in its member countries in national response planning, preparedness, mitigation, and in better use of their own data gathering and interpretation staff

Therefore, the Evaluation Team believes that FEWS Regional Field Representatives, particularly in the Sahel and in the Horn, but also in Southern Africa, need to focus more than they have in the past on how to strengthen their respective regional organizations – particularly AGRHYMET and IGAD – in being able to 1) provide continuing training for member governments (and even for staff of NGOs and CBOs in these countries) in disaster preparedness and prevention, response planning and field data-gathering and analysis, including vulnerability analysis, ii) sensitizing decision-makers in their member governments to the need for improved response planning and greater attention to – **and** budgets for – early warning and vulnerability analysis units in their governments

Section V

Recommendations for the Future of FEWS

The overall Evaluation Team recommendation for the future is that there be a follow-on to the present FEWS III *This recommendation is made in full awareness of the likelihood of even more constrained USAID development and PL 480 budgets in the future*. As USAID senior management considers the opportunity costs associated with the alternative uses of scarce funds for a FEWS follow-on versus other options, the Team suggests that the following points be kept in mind

- So long as the United States Government desires to prevent people in Africa from suffering from severe food deprivation and famine, it will require timely and credible information and analysis about the trends and events leading to severe, widespread and chronic episodes of hunger and the best possible information about the numbers of people likely to be affected and the severity of likely adverse impacts
- The issue is not whether there is need for this information, it is how to secure adequate and timely amounts of information at the lowest cost
- It is not desirable to continue a strictly US-financed food security and famine information gathering and reporting entity indefinitely. Therefore, support should be provided to strengthen sustainable capacities in Africa, country-by-country, regionally, or both, in order that they, over time take over the tasks now being accomplished by FEWS at the country level with a level of performance equal to that now being performed by FEWS. This is not a new idea and it is not an easy task. It will require quite a different approach and different emphases than was the case in FEWS III and its predecessors. The focus will not be on high quality information gathering and analysis featuring one-on-one skills training, it will be on strengthening and, if necessary, creating quality country institutions to undertake the information gathering and analysis tasks and regional institutions to train and provide technical and professional backstopping to country-based professionals. It will require a high priority call on domestic funding in these countries so that international support can, over the very longest term be phased slowly down and out. It will require a much stronger partnership between the public and private sectors in undertaking these tasks. It, thus, becomes part of a much larger effort recognizing that to undertake this task successfully will require efforts of many different sorts, in a number of sectors and is a long-term effort. The alternatives, the Team believes, are for the US to either discontinue funding efforts to gather information and live with demonstrably less timely and credible information, or to continue, indefinitely, underwriting the costs of a FEWS III-type operation

A Specific Longer Term Recommendations

■ FEWS operations must be sustained beyond 1999

Whether or not efforts intensify to strengthen the national and regional institutions that will be required to take over the FEWS responsibilities over time, FEWS' primary operations must be sustained in Sub-Saharan Africa's most food insecure, vulnerable countries for a number of years. The need for the data collection, ground-truthing, reporting, capacity building and institutional strengthening will not diminish. For reasons stated above, the need for FEWS is probably greater presently than at any time in the past two decades.

A future FEWS-like activity will face the same challenges presently confronting FEWS III in terms of a continuing need in the United States Government for credible information about changes in conditions portending famine in Sub-Saharan Africa and accompanying insights and analysis regarding the options for confronting those conditions. While it may have been hoped at an earlier stage that African country capacities would have been upgraded to the point that national early warning and vulnerability assessment capabilities would have been able to take over from FEWS, this has not happened. The need for FEWS analysis and reporting remains **as** strong as in the beginning. The reasons lie largely in the reality of continuing chronic poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa and continuing weaknesses in governments to be informed about and to develop strategies to respond to the causation of food insecurity and famine within the intransigent reality of this widespread African poverty. The answer to this problem, insofar **as** a follow-on to FEWS III is concerned, lies in a more fundamental and broadened approach to increase national and regional capacities to take over FEWS' job in a sustainable manner.

Some USAID officers interviewed by the Evaluation Team believed this situation to have been a failing of FEWS – i.e. of FEWS not having discharged its capacity-building responsibilities properly. The Team respectfully disagrees with this view. While capacity-building remains within FEWS' terms of reference as contained in the original Project Paper and in the USAID-ARD contract, it has been, in the Team's judgment, 'a task too far.' FEWS has not had the level and type of resources, nor the amount of access to senior host government decision-makers to have been able to guarantee achievement of sustained, substantial levels of capacity building. FEWS **has**, in fact, been engaged heavily in capacity-building at both regional and country levels throughout the project. FEWS inputs in the form of training, handbooks, manuals, software, technical assistance, follow-up, and post-training evaluation at both country and regional levels are impressive. Whether in formal workshop settings or in informal, one-on-one training sessions, FEWS staff have spent perhaps more time on training and skills enhancement than they should (especially given that the Evaluation Team has determined that large amounts of informal training – especially of NGO counterparts has gone unrecorded). The problem has been in retaining these trained people and provisioning them with the budgetary, logistics and equipment support needed to have kept them on the job and effective. To have been able to convince these poor, financially strapped governments of the priority of doing this – within all the other priority demands on their meager budgets – was far beyond FEWS ability. FEWS capability to discharge its capacity building responsibilities exists primarily at the 'output' stage defined **as** having appropriately and adequately trained, or upgraded the skills of, 'x' number of counterparts in host

government, NGO and other donor staffs. To have that level of achieved output should, it was hypothesized, convey sustainably improved performance by government, NGO and donors organizations. To have strengthened institutionalized ways of conducting food security-related business by these organizations, however, requires significantly changed mindsets by senior decision makers in these organizations, increases in the flows of supporting financial resources and an overall setting devoid of conflicting needs for these people, finances and physical resources. This has not happened.

All of these requirements for success *at the purpose level* are beyond the scope of FEWS' own skills and resources. The need for these externalities to be in place in order to guarantee the sustainable achievement of both capacity-building and institutional strengthening is, effectively, a set of unstated assumptions necessitating the attention of actors other than FEWS – presumably local USAIDs, USAID/W or other involved donors – to ensure that pressures were applied to governments – and external resources supplied – to see that these exogenous factors were in place in order to solidify gains at the output level and convey them as achievements at the purpose level.

This supports the Recommendation that a FEWS-like activity continue into the 21st century to gather data and information, collaborate with others similarly engaged, *increase* its training and institutional strengthening efforts and reconfigure its field staff skills to accord with related Recommendation Number 2 below.

As it is highly likely that USAID's overall budget in 2000 will be smaller than it was in 1994, a FEWS follow-on will have to command high priority among all supplicants for USAID financing and may very well need to find funds from other sources. This is addressed in Recommendation 5.

2 The configuration of the field presence must change in a follow-on activity

Although the overall objective of FEWS IV will be much the same as for FEWS III, several elements of FEWS IV will have to be different.

The country-level FEWS presence should be no less than two professional FEWS representatives in each country. These individuals should normally be nationals of the country in which they are posted. FEWS will need to be strengthened at the country level in places where there remains only one FEWS representative because, while the need for information will be no less than under FEWS III, the local governments' capacities to gather and analyze such information appear, in most countries, to be declining, putting more pressure on FEWS representatives to undertake field ground-truthing. As was the case in FEWS III, strengthening the skills and increasing levels of expertise should be given high priority.

Widening their development-related policy exposure should be added to the basic set of FEWS IV objectives. Field representatives should interface with senior, policy-level officers in the host governments more than was the case – in many countries – in FEWS III. In addition, these staff, with assistance from regional FEWS representatives, FEWS/W staff and consultants, will be required to assist in the development of training modules and related training materials at

national training institutes or at local universities covering food security-related data gathering, rapid appraisal techniques, the use of certain classes of software and socio-economic analysis

FEWS regional offices will need to focus more exclusively on enhancing sustainable regional training capacities rather than focusing so much as in the past on one-on-one training at the country level. Regional organizations (SADC, CILSS/AGRHYMET and IGAD) need to be strengthened further to offer on-going training of EW and VA personnel of member states (and, hopefully NGO staffs) capacity-building and shared regional facilities that will save costly country-level duplication of agro-climatic and on the ground analysis. SADC is undertaking some interesting activities in regionally-based training and capacity-building which though small at this time, could be expanded upon.

Finally, particular attention will need to be devoted to changing the way in which a FEWS follow-on deals with the Sahel and West Africa, generally. There is a need to devote greater attention to all CILSS member countries, not just the five included in FEWS III. Such attention, frankly, needs to be extended to other, non-CILSS countries in coastal West Africa as well. Not only is there demonstrable serious food insecurity in countries like Cape Verde – a chronic food aid recipient – but food insecurity is also as serious a problem, for a variety of reasons, in interior Senegal, Northern Cameroon, in conflict-prone Liberia, Sierra Leone and Congo as it is in Somalia, Lesotho or Chad. Increasing the state of food insecurity, and of the factors creating famine situations in the interior Sahel are as tied to trends and events in Coastal West Africa as they are to domestic situations. A FEWS follow-on will need to provide more attention to this broader arena than it has been able to do in the past.

3 Increase the use of vulnerability assessment analysis for project targeting and impact analysis

The Evaluation Team was very impressed by the impact of the Malawi VAM on targeting decisions made by the government, major donors and NGOs. A FEWS follow-on should press elsewhere for further government, donor and NGO use of vulnerability assessment results for targeting food security-focused development programs and for measuring progress and impact. Donors should design such VA use into their programs and contribute to the costs of the VA exercises. The Evaluation Team detected among some USAID field mission personnel a feeling that the shift toward tracking vulnerability of populations, communities or households to severe food insecurity (as opposed to focusing solely on near-term causes of incipient famine) was not only not part of their own set of country strategic objectives, but was veering quite significantly from the narrower focus on cost-effective emergency response. One USAID mission made it quite clear that to the Team that food security was not among their strategic objectives. Another suggested that FEWS activities in their country were a USAID/W concern, not theirs. A Mission Director in a third country suggested that vulnerability assessments were of more use to social science than to USAID missions focused on more pragmatic and measurable goals.

A general theme touched on by such comments is a sense that FEWS' efforts, not being reflected in a USAID mission's particular country-level strategic objectives, are, from the perspective of that mission, of lesser importance to those countries. In response to these views, the Team suggests that USAID missions knowing more about what creates high and increasing household

vulnerability – in effect, knowing more about what are causing changes in the predisposition of population groups in their country to suffer greatly from these externalities – is not only of use in USAID's being able to more precisely targeting food aid and other emergency response programs on affected groups, it should (or ought) to help inform missions about the effectiveness (i.e. impact on people) of all sorts of economic reform efforts, liberalization initiatives, and development activities, even those stemming from the mission's own program. At a minimum, such knowledge is essential to improved targeting and effectiveness of impact on beneficiaries of a wide range of USAID-funded activities (development as well as emergency) in those countries.

The example of the proposed PROAGRI model in Mozambique may be a useful model to demonstrate where a FEWS follow-on could be particularly effective, both programmatically and cost-wise. It is significant because, conceptually, its design will contain FEWS-style, on-going EW and VA techniques as an integral part of the country's premier rural poverty alleviation strategy. This is a proposed ten-year agricultural development program in which the government, all donors and NGOs are sharing design, financing and implementation responsibilities of a sector development activity in agriculture. The results of the Mozambican vulnerability assessment process will be informing the development of PROAGRI and will be used to determine relative impacts of PROAGRI activities among different agro-ecological zones and economic population groups. It will be developed with an information component built in to undertake crop assessments, the collection and analysis of livestock data, nutritional data, and household vulnerability data. FEWS and Mozambicans trained and under the FEWS umbrella are likely to be a major component of both the design and implementation of PROAGRI.

4 Future vulnerability assessment analysis needs to have validity at the 4th administrative level

All these countries need to decentralize the collection of information to the sub-district level and, through increasingly professional involvement of NGOs and local government authorities, to empower local organizations to be able to use data at that level in conceptualizing and implementing local development activities. This ties directly into the Social Action Fund (SAF) approach pioneered in Africa by the EU and the World Bank. By increasing the capacities of local communities to receive and utilize data and feedback on their own local poverty and food security causality, their ability to produce effective proposals for funding under SAF-type programs would be increased dramatically – as, too, would the ability of donors and the communities themselves to monitor the effectiveness and impact of their local programs.

There is a community-level disaster preparedness aspect to this recommendation. Theoretically, one of the most effective disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies is one in which the vulnerable communities themselves are enabled to take steps to increase their resiliency in the face of drought or other disasters. There is presently training offered in the Southern Africa region in community-level prevention and prevention of disasters – enabling communities to be better prepared to fend off the worst effects of shocks, or to be able to live with their consequences for longer periods of time. This training needs to be duplicated, adapted to regional situations in each of the three regions and offered to government and NGO personnel working in community-level development programs, and eventually to community-based organizations (CBOs) as well.

5 The financing of FEWS IV should be internationalized

FEWS provides a service to all donors in the countries in which it operates. Without exception, the Evaluation Team found donor representatives highly complimentary in describing the utility of the various FEWS reports to their own work. These donors – including the international donors – should be asked to cover some of the costs of future FEWS operations. If there were to be more multi-donor cooperation on integrating EW and VA activities into food security-related sector development strategies, such funding could be a mutually-funded component of the sector support activity. Another tie-in could be with the World Bank's long-term African **human** capacity enhancement activities. The strengthening of African institutions' ability to gather crop, livestock, market, household income and nutrition data extends well beyond FEWS' need for such information. If donors could be made to focus on the need to strengthen EW and related units in countries that are the most at risk of drought, famines or increased acute food insecurity, it seems possible, even likely, that some FEWS follow-on activities related to such capacity building initiatives could be funded elsewhere.

There are some in USAID/W, aware of likely future funding constraints, who have considered the concept of FEWS becoming an international institute which could solicit its funding from a wide range of potential donors – even including philanthropic organizations. This is potentially a very good idea. In the view of the Evaluation Team, however, it is an idea to be worked toward *during* – not before the initiation of – a FEWS follow-on.

B Near Term the Next 18 Months

1 A second Regional FEWS representative should be posted to Niamey to work as closely as possible with AGRHYMET

The Evaluation Team believes that the second regional representative should be posted to Niamey and posted within AGRHYMET as the official FEWS liaison person. He/she should have a terms of reference which makes of him/her primarily a backstop for FEWS country operations in the Eastern Sahel but tasked secondarily with duties relating to institutional strengthening of AGRHYMET. This assumes of course that AGRHYMET desires a FEWS officer to be resident within the AGRHYMET structure.

The basic reason the Team feels it is time to have one of the FEWS regional representatives in AGRHYMET is a need to strengthen AGRHYMET *as the* regional capacity building and institutional strengthening training institute in the Sahel (See Recommendation 2 above). The proposed FEWS regional representative in AGRHYMET would have as his/her primary AGRHYMET-related responsibility helping AGRHYMET strengthen its training of country EWNA personnel in on-the-ground data acquisition and analysis, household survey techniques, the use of GIS mapping in conjunction with GPS and VA data and related socio-economic analysis. The purpose would be to establish a training curriculum, to develop training materials and to energize and upgrade the skills of the AGRHYMET training staff.

2 FEWS and USAID/W need to determine official status of FEWS field representatives and other project assets, country-by-country

The problem here is that FEWS representatives and their vehicles and equipment are financed from funds made available by the US Government. The host governments have rules and regulations governing the importation of goods and, occasionally – especially where there is no bilateral agreement between that government and the US Government – there can be conflicts which result in project goods not being allowed into the country without the payment of duties and taxes. US law normally prohibits US taxpayer monies being used to pay duties and taxes. In countries where there is a USAID Mission and a basic bilateral agreement, such problems are usually addressed in such agreements and more readily overcome. In countries where there is no longer a USAID Mission and/or no bilateral, there are often problems. Sometimes, seemingly small administrative problems can absorb an enormous amount of the time and attention of the local FEWS representative, often not conversant with either US or local government legal positions on the problem at hand. USAID/AFR/SD, with USAID mission involvement, should develop a strategy for resolving problems of this sort as quickly as possible.

3 The content of the monthly country reporting should be made available to more users

In some countries, the local FEWS representative distributes to a select local audience copies of his/her monthly report to FEWS. In other countries no local distribution of such reports is made, beyond the local USAID (if any) and the US Embassy. FEWS/W distributes these reports to select USAID/W staff. The Evaluation Team was struck by how much useful and interesting information is contained in these reports which does make its way into the *Bulletin* and which does not become part of a database or information base that could be of interest and use to professionals in food security-related subjects dealing with a particular country region or all of Africa.

Some of the FEWS country representatives mentioned to the Evaluation Team that they felt that too much of their effort in preparing the Monthly Report – the single largest activity on their calendar month after month – did not find its way into the monthly FEWS *Bulletin* and was, thus, not available to a wider audience of users interested in food security-related events and trends in that particular country.

The Team recommends that FEWS/W consider options for making more of the material contained in these reports available to wider audiences. FAO/GIEWS/Rome made known to the Team their interest in obtaining as many of these reports as possible as additional sources of information which they would like to use to help them track developing situations in at-risk countries. Users in other development agencies would also find such information useful, as might academic researchers.

Among the options might be an added link on the FEWS website which would convey an internet user to a page with a form to be filled out explaining the user's need for access to monthly country reporting. FEWS could periodically review such requests and grant password

access to those with legitimate need to access this information. A similar system is used successfully by WFP to grant access to internet users to WFP country food flows data. Other options exist, as well. The point is to make more of the information contained in FEWS country reporting available to interested users.

4 The Vulnerability Assessments should be posted on the FEWS Website

As the quality of the VAs improves and their uses multiply, it is time that they become more widely available. The most efficient way is for the VAs to be posted (presumably by a link to a daughter page) on the FEWS website. This could, for example, be done in Adobe PDF format and accessible to anyone with Adobe's free Acrobat Reader software. Many universities are posting professional documents in this fashion. (A USAID-financed Michigan State University activity posts many of its reports in this way.) Even CILSS is posting its internal magazine on the web using this method. It is probably time for FEWS to do something similar. The Team is aware that FEWS is now actively working toward this objective.

Annex A Individual Country Reports

1 The Sahelian Countries

Country Report Burkina Faso

FEWS initiated activity in 1985	1 AFFR
FEWS AFFR is located in private office space	
<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and analyze secondary data on crop and livestock conditions agricultural prices actual and proposed food aid levels, nutrition and health demographics and household income • Prepare and distribute to FEWS/W and the U S Embassy a monthly report summarizing all information collected on the state of food security and related indicators • Attend food security meetings regularly with representatives of the ministers of agriculture and social affairs and representatives from UNDP WFP bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs • Make frequent field trips during the growing season to assess first hand the on-the-ground crop prospects or to investigate reports of problems • Gathering of materials and preparation of annual vulnerability assessments 	
<u>Accomplishments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FEWS Representative uses a combination of NDVI RFE and Crop Water Satisfaction Index and other weather data to target areas for field trips and ground truthing • Preparation of the monthly report to FEWS/W • Preparation of multi year cereals price graphs and provision of them to colleagues in country • Prepares a vulnerability assessment on an annual basis closely following the FEWS guidelines for Current VA preparation He also works closely with the WFP regional VAM officer headquartered in Ouagadougou 	
<u>Evaluative Commentary</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AFFR is still relatively new in his position and is establishing the informal network that has proved so useful in other FEWS/Sahelian countries This effort should continue to be a priority • The AFFR feels that he requires more training with the FEWS software packages before he is competent to provide TA and training to his colleagues in the governments SAP and agricultural directorate • The AFFR provided the FEWS <i>Bulletin</i> and other reports to provincial level government officers and was able to increase the amount of data they provided to him in return • The AFFR believes that there is room for improvement among all the organizations which have responsibility for collecting information and preparing reports on EW 	
<u>Issues</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AFFR is still very new to his job and feels the need for additional training to become fully effective • While he shares the FEWS <i>Bulletin</i> and other reporting with his colleagues the AFFR does not share the content of his monthly report with any entities other than FEWSNV and the U S Embassy in Ouagadougou He would like to share it more widely but feels constrained by what he believes to be FEWS policy from doing so Given the practice of several FEWS representatives in other countries regarding sharing the monthly report with selected organizations in their countries FEWSNV needs to provide guidance to the Burkina AFFR regarding FEWS policy on sharing of monthly reports or assist him to determine how he should decide the distribution on his own 	

Country Report Chad

FEWS initiated activity in 1986	1 AFFR
Located in private office space	
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving and interpreting agro climatic imagery and relating it to historical averages before sharing it with the Multidisciplinary Working Group (GTP) on a dekadal basis Collecting primary and secondary crop data information on food aid levels, price and trade information and rainfall data for inclusion in the monthly country reports Briefing USG staff in Ndjamena on the food security situation in the country 	
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FEWS representative is presently just about the only experienced field person who is able to travel into the countryside. His field trips are crucial not only for his own primary data collection but for the cooperation they engender with other food security stakeholders. He always fills his vehicle with people from other organizations who because of funding shortages are unable to get their own fieldwork done. The present AFFR has been on the job for three years. He has been able to complete a first vulnerability assessment and is attempting to complete an update under quite difficult circumstances. Briefings of embassy staff and close cooperation with most of the other food security information-gathering and response organizations in the country. Providing many forms of assistance to NGOs and other organizations which rely on FEWS for information and some logistics support. 	
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the data scarce environment of Chad, the remote sensing tools assume a greater importance than in countries with better access to on-the-ground data. The FEWS representative, a trained meteorologist, makes good use of these tools in targeting geographic areas for further investigation and for validating information from other sources. Because of his meteorological background, the AFFR/Chad is avowedly more comfortable with met data than with economic data. Chad appears to be a good posting for this individual. During the past several years the donors have made a concerted effort to establish a food security information system. The methodology is in place, the people have been trained and the databases established. Unfortunately the entire effort is now near collapse. The Government of Chad has not been able to cover the costs as donor financing has ended. The external financing for the Early Warning System (SAP) ended earlier this year and SAP has closed its doors. Field agents are not being paid and there are no funds for gasoline for vehicles. The FEWS representative believes that the breakdowns in the system are in part responsible for a delayed detection of a food insecurity problem in the southern part of the country. More such failures are possible. The increasingly severe degradation of the data resources available to the FEWS representative means that it is increasingly more difficult for him to produce accurate assessments of growing food insecurity. All other professionals working in Chad – both in and outside the government – who were interviewed for this evaluation expressed the highest professional regard for the work FEWS is doing in the country. With the demise of the SAP, FEWS has also become extremely important to the U.S. Embassy in Ndjamena who informed the Team of concern that the reports that the FEWS representative was sending to FEWS/W had not yet raised sufficient alarm about the deteriorating food security situation in the country. 	
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The collapsing food security information system is a great concern. There are presently expected to be no food stocks in the country and the government lacks funds to import food needed for an emergency reserve. Because of the problems with limited access and information availability in Chad, the only serious analysis being done is the monthly reporting by the FEWS AFFR to Washington. Only a small portion of this work makes its way into the FEWS <i>Bulletin</i>. There is some local frustration that more of the reporting sent by the FEWS AFFR to Washington is not available to other interested organizations in Chad. Given the serious deterioration in the overall ability to collect and analyze information about food insecurity in Chad and given the intense demands on the time and abilities of the FEWS AFFR, FEWS/W and USAID/W should give consideration to adding a second professional position in Chad. 	

Countrv Report **Mali**

FEWS initiated activity in 1985	1 CFFR
Located in USAID Mission office space	
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect EW data and information for inclusion in the monthly report to FEWS/W Maintain good working relations with Government of Mali and non-government personnel working in or with DNAMR DNAER DNSI GTPA NMS PRMC SAP SIM SNS as these are his principal sources of data and users of the FEWS country reporting Brief USAID and U.S. Embassy personnel on the food security situation and related subjects 	
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CFFRs monthly food security situation report is widely circulated to government and non governmental groups concerned with food security issues The Malian system for decision making is through consensus building. The GTPA and SAP consultative committees are excellent examples of this process which, although tedious at times, enables long term progress and a sense of ownership among the participants. FEWS has become an integral part of this decision-making and information exchange system. The benefits in terms of better information to feed FEWS monthly reporting and the FEWS technical contributions to Malian government processes are clearly mutually rewarding. FEWS/Mali prepares an annual Vulnerability Assessment in December of each year, in conjunction with the post harvest assessment. The format and methodology follow closely the FEWS Current Vulnerability Assessment Outline, Technical Guidance and Mechanics Manual (May 1998). FEWS has created and still supports a GIS special interest group which continues to meet on a monthly basis to explore new GIS uses and techniques. 	
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEWS/Mali does not use remote sensing imagery because the local FEWS rep does not believe it sufficiently useful in producing early warning and vulnerability assessment materials for Mali. Compared with the other Sahelian countries where FEWS operates, the various organizations involved in data and information-gathering in Mali seem to be in relatively good shape. FEWS is able to secure crop status, food stocks, agricultural prices, cross border trade, household income, demographic and local meteorological data regularly. The CFFR is able to travel one week per month to gather first hand information about local food security situations and is usually able to do so in the company of other government or NGO personnel. He participates as a member of GTPA which meets every ten days to exchange information and in the SAP working group which produces a regular bulletin describing the food security situation in the country. In all regards both Mali and the FEWS CFFR function as they should in gathering, sharing and reporting on whatever information is available regarding food security. There may be too much emphasis in Mali on data collection and not enough on data analysis and interpretation. In 1999, donor funding for the DIAPER project will come to an end and the Government of Mali will have to cover the costs of the DNAMR data collection, analysis and publication effort. At present the Government appears unprepared to take over that responsibility. Remote sensing information has been greatly downplayed in Mali. Neither the government nor any of the NGO organizations with whom the Evaluation Team met were using NDVI or other agro-climatic remotely sensed data. There are several vulnerability assessment type exercises that have been – and continue to be – conducted in Mali. The SAP produces a VA separate from the FEWS VA, and SCF/UK has produced its own vulnerability risk map. WFP has been a late starter in Mali but their regional VAM Officer stationed in Burkina Faso has been consulting with FEWS/Mali on a WFP VA to be conducted in the near future. While there might be some theoretical risk of overkill or conflicting findings, the reality has thus far been a considerable congruence of findings. Since these have been produced with somewhat differing methodologies they have served a quite useful purpose of supplying confirming evidence to support shared conclusions, or – as was the case recently the case regarding differing estimates of food aid requirements – the need to clarify the reasons for differences in findings. The VA exercises in Mali seem a healthy set of efforts and ought not to be overly harmonized. Most NGOs, however, feel that to be more useful in helping them target resources on appropriate target communities on the least food secure, the present arrondissement-level analysis should be brought one administrative level lower – to the commune level. This supports a generalized finding and conclusion of this Evaluation Report that if VA analysis is to contribute meaningfully to the targeting of relief, rehabilitation and development resources, it will have to be accomplished in ways that produce statistically valid conclusions to the fourth rather than the third administrative level in most African countries¹³. 	
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEWS reporting may not be timely enough for some decision making purposes. FEWS reporting appears not to get to senior-most decision makers in the government. Administrative duties occupy an excessive amount of the CFFRs time. A second person is needed. The requirement for USAID/W approval for in country travel is a significant problem. 	

¹³ Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa divide themselves administratively into provinces (second level), districts (third level) and sub-districts (fourth level). This evaluation recommends that VA analysis in the future strive to be valid to the sub-district level for targeting purposes. One reason that the Malawi VA has been widely used for targeting is that it is intended to be valid to the EPA level.

Country Report Mauritania

FEWS initiated activity in 1986	1 AFFR
Located in US Embassy GSO Office Complex	
<u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in collection of primary crop and livestock data in coordination with SISAAR and MDRE Prepares a monthly report for FEWS/W Prepares a monthly food security report in French which is widely circulated throughout the country 	
<u>Accomplishments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FEWS representative prepares a monthly food security situation report which is circulated to 43 organization in Mauritania including government donors and NGOs. These reports are also sent to eleven Wilaya level government offices via public bus drivers. The AFFR prepares an updated vulnerability assessment each year in conjunction with the post-harvest assessment. WFP has not been as actively engaged in this process as they have been in other African countries. The U.S. Ambassador and the DCM stressed to the Evaluation Team that FEWS monthly reports, the FEWS <i>Bulletin</i> and FEWS vulnerability assessments were their primary sources of information regarding food security situation. An embassy staff cut of fifty percent has greatly limited their ability to make field trips, thus increasing their reliance on FEWS. They report a good working relationship with the FEWS representative who has been very responsive in assisting with various requests for special studies and reports. 	
<u>Evaluative Commentary</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEWS is regarded as probably the most reliable source in the country of information on food security status although much of the information FEWS published is qualitative owing to the wide range of data gathering problems cited in the issues section below. FEWS is an active participant in the GTP which exchanges and uses agro meteorological and other data. The meetings of this group tend to focus more on what data were collected than on how the data ought to be interpreted and used. There are a number of satisfied users of FEWS reporting in Mauritania. WFP uses FEWS data regularly to ground-truth the government's food security reporting. LWF currently has 39 feeding stations in Mauritania and uses FEWS reporting to identify other pockets of food insecure populations reporting that the FEWS information is accurate and timely. Oxfam uses FEWS satellite imagery to determine the condition of the pasturelands and FEWS cereals price data to assist entrepreneurs in their small business development projects to make decisions on how long to retain stocks and where to market them. FEWS uses its field trips to increase the capacities of NGOs to better understand various rapid rural appraisal techniques and data collection and analysis methodologies. FEWS has been unsuccessful in having other organizations use FEWS developed software. The language problem will have to be overcome if AGMAN, PRICEMAN, etc. are to be used in Mauritania. There have also been problems with defective distribution diskettes. 	
<u>Issues</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics on small ruminants are lacking. There is no consistent monitoring of household cereal stocks. Most demographic data are old; there is no data at all on migration patterns and poor data of population growth rates. Though an increasing number of donor offices and NGOs have now connected to the internet, only a few have visited the FEWS website. NDVI data is used to monitor pastureland in the central part of the country. In the south, however, where agricultural production is prevalent, NDVI is not able to distinguish between trees, crops and pastures and therefore is not used for monitoring the evolution of production during the growing season. The lack of accurate and timely data on health, crop production, food needs and market prices is a critical problem in Mauritania. Final crop production estimates published by SSP/DSAA are often too late to be useful in determining where populations are at risk. Market price data collected by the government is also problematic because the location and number of markets covered in their samples is changed from one month to the next. Both FEWS and the government's CSA use MDRE government production statistics in their cereals balance sheets but calculate food availability differently. FEWS does not include animal feed in their food needs equation while CSA does. The FEWS estimates of 1996/97 on farm grain stocks based on interviews with farmers were two thirds lower than the government's statistics which were based on more indirect methods. 	

Country Report Niger

FEWS initiated activity in 1985	1 CFFR
Located in private office space	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FEWS representative collects secondary crop and livestock data from surveys conducted by the Statistics Department of the Agricultural Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture. These data form the principal elements of the FEWS Monthly Report. The CFFR also collects data regarding market prices in 54 national markets plus data from Nigeria and Benin and periodic special price data in areas or among populations where there is a suspected problem. Participate in national crop assessments. Maintain close working relationships with the NGO community. They are sources of good site specific information and are recipients of FEWS reports, TA and training. Conducts field trips to assess conditions among populations reported to be at high risk of food insecurity. Participate in the annual update of the Vulnerability Assessment. 	
<u>Accomplishments</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares the FEWS monthly report and provides it to FEWS/W, the local USAID Mission and selected local recipients. Prepared the 1997/98 Current Vulnerability Assessment Report. Provided considerable assistance to the regional WFP VAM office in Ouagadougou and to the local part-time WFP representative in Niamey. This has included providing information about VA methodology and data. Discussions are underway regarding the CFFR providing training and guidance to the local WFP representative in FEWS VA methods. 	
<u>Evaluative Commentary</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEWS has been operational in Niger for more than 12 years. The CFFR is experienced, respected among her peers in Niger and effective in gathering and publishing relevant information and informed analysis. That said, formal relations with the Government of Niger are not robust and have declined in recent years, as the government seems to have increasingly cut itself off not only from FEWS but from the NGO community as well. There is need for the size of the local FEWS office to be increased to two officers by adding an AFFR to the present CFFR. The decrease in cooperation between the CFFR and the government seems to be at least in part one of the results of the closing out of the USAID presence and a sense that the FEWS representative has been adversely affected by the fallout from the imminent departure of USAID. Satellite imagery is not well used by the government of Niger. There has been a decline in the government's ability to carry out field surveys and assessments caused by funding shortfalls. This is increasing the difficulty for FEWS, other donors and the NGO community in determining the present food availability situation. If uncorrected for very long, non-government means will have to be developed to undertake the necessary field data collection and analysis. FEWS/Niger handles a large number of informal requests for information. These need to be documented. 	
<u>Issues</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is probably need for a Regional FEWS Field Representative to cover Niger and Chad. The fact that there is only one person in the FEWS office in Niger makes it extremely difficult for her to be on necessarily extended field trips and simultaneously to take care of administrative and reporting tasks in the office. With the decline in the effectiveness of the government's crop and related survey work, the need for FEWS field visits to secure minimally acceptable amounts of data for the monthly report has increased. The Government's Early Warning and Disaster Management System (SAP/GC) uses an estimated per capita cereals requirement of 240kg/per capita/year in its vulnerability assessment. FEWS uses a figure of 215kg/per capita/year. The difference is said to stem from different calculations of milling extraction rates. This difference is significant and has become something of a political problem. It needs to be resolved. With the likely close down of the USAID/Mission in Niamey, there will be need for the CFFR to be covered by some sort of agreement between the US and Niger governments regarding rights and privileges. The ending of USAID financial support for the Statistics Department of the Ministry of Agriculture has meant that a relatively well-trained staff is increasingly hampered by a lack of operating funds. Not only do they lack funds to purchase paper to print their reports and to purchase gasoline to take field trips, they have received no salary for eight months. The FEWS representative no longer attends the National Food Security Meetings. While there has been a USAID Mission present, the FEWS Rep has been able to provide FEWS inputs to these meetings via representation by the USAID attendee. In the future, FEWS will have to develop some other mechanism for providing FEWS inputs into the government's senior most food security policy organization. FEWS has also been excluded as a matter of policy from the Multidisciplinary Working Group (GTP) which is supposed to gather every ten days to exchange information and produce a bulletin. This has become strictly a GON group. As a result of exclusion from National Food Security Meetings and the GTP, FEWS/Niger presently has no formal direct contacts with the Government of Niger, except through written reports. 	

2 The Greater Horn of Africa

Country Report Ethiopia

FEWS initiated activity in 1993 (after two years of coverage from Washington)		2 AFFRs one a mission buy-in
Located in USAID Mission office space		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather information about food insecurity in this very food insecure country and develop it into highly credible reports on food availability and access issues and the need for outside food aid Provide capacity building of people and institutional strengthening of EW and food security-related organizations in government and among the vast NGO community Seek ways to collaborate and share data ideas methods software and analysis with all other organizations working of food insecurity in Ethiopia Constantly brief USAID on FEWS independent assessment of government food aid requests and justification 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEWS/Ethiopia produces a monthly food security bulletin jointly with the European Commissions Local Food Security Unit (LFSU) which is widely distributed to government offices donors UN Agencies and NGOs It is regarded as the best Mission interest in FEWS work has led to a Mission buy-in supporting the second AFFR in the FEWS office an agriculture economist Has engaged in institutional strengthening effort in DPPC using old Mission PD&S funds This has led to a full scale \$3 7 million 4-year USAID project Strengthening Emergency Response Capacities The project will help finance the completion of more than 20 profiles of chronically vulnerable zones FEWS was a major contributor in the design of this major capacity building project FEWS has helped improve Ethiopian capabilities in database design and enabled DPPC to use RAINMAN AGMAN SPACEMAN PRICEMAN and WINDISP 3 FEWS software (This process has gone even further in Eritrea where the now departed CFFR did considerable capacity-building and training) FEWS was instrumental in establishing an independent Needs Assessment Steering Committee and a Vulnerability Working Group in DPPC 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American CFFR departed Addis Ababa in June 1998 He is expected to be replaced in September, 1998 Ethiopia has a very large US food aid program involving both PL 480 Title II and Title III with most distribution through NGOs FEWS job here is extremely important in that it must provide credible food needs information in a country where there are numerous estimates of needs floating through an enormous community of interested organizations and where the government has a track record of inflating needs The DPPC is an enormous organization compared to all other drought preparedness organizations in Africa with 1 500 staff –in Addis Ababa alone (although DPPC is decentralized at least in theory) In addition there are a tremendous number of donor and NGO organizations doing something to confront food insecurity in the country These numbers make it very difficult for the very small FEWS staff to have much influence The government and FAO/WFP have until recently been conducting independent crop production and food aid needs estimates There is presently an effort underway to reach agreement on common methodologies and to conduct these assessments together with broad participation of concerned agencies including USAID/FEWS There has been a sense among some observers of FEWS that the organization has a go it alone philosophy in many countries including Ethiopia The recently departed CFFR scoffed at this notion as ridiculous in a country such as Ethiopia where there are so many interested parties in constant motion around issues of food insecurity and famine The key to FEWS efforts in Ethiopia have been collaboration and capacity building which this departing FEWS officer referred to as the tenets of everything we did in Ethiopia The fact that the local FEWS unit produces a monthly bulletin which in some ways parallels the governments own Early Warning System Monthly Report has been something of an irritant to the government especially so since the FEWS document is widely seen as intended to be an independent (and presumably more objective) reporting document than the governments Some in USAID are suggesting that the circulation of the FEWS document be more limited in order to reduce the friction 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The backstopping of Eritrea has heretofore been covered by the Ethiopia FEWS office The recent hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea may make this coverage problematic The RFFR's office in Nairobi will probably have to cover Asmara until such time as the decision to locate a FEWS AFFR in Asmara is negotiated with the Eritrean government and a person selected and posted Assessing the need for and allocation of food aid always difficult in Ethiopia has become an even more contentious problem lately An MSU grain marketing project was shut down by the Ethiopian Government apparently because some in the government did not like a particular food security report prepared by the MSU team Wereda (4th administrative level) information goes into the DPPC black box and what comes out and is provided to the donors is not necessarily similar to what went in especially if it did not yield justification for more food aid The fact that FEWS sits in the USAID office is seen as giving it more clout with the government than if it were located in DPPC where it would much less independent 		

Country Report Kenya

Kenya	FEWS initiated activity in 1992	1 AFFR
Located in REDSO/EA Office Complex		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the monthly Country Report for FEWS/W • Compare remotely sensed dekadal data with KMD data to identify areas where anomalous conditions might exist • Collect monthly district level crop and livestock data district-by district collect nutrition data from NGOs, donors and government collect market price data 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a continuing system of district level data collection • Publication of a two-page monthly vulnerability update which is widely read and is often quoted in the Kenyan press • Initial vulnerability assessment was produced in 1994-95 An update is now being finalized based on the monthly vulnerability updates • FEWS output is often used by the U S Ambassador as briefing material in meetings with the Kenyan President and other high officials • USAID staff believe that FEWS provides a much needed household food needs/access perspective which helps the USAID Mission's agricultural strategy 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FEWS country program has proven very effective in focusing attention on geographic areas of Kenya where food security problems may be emerging and in documenting dimensions and sources of the problems and conditions of people affected • FEWS has gained credibility by its high degree of interactivity on early warning and on the-ground data collection • FEWS has become an authoritative voice in Kenya in part because of the presence of four FEWS programs in Nairobi They provide a valuable service in consolidating diverse sources of information and presenting it in a readable regular and objective manner • FEWS is well positioned to deal with short term responses in Kenya The use of their database to examine longer term causative factors and longer term needs should be explored There is a need to focus greater VA attention on longer term causality • Given its limited resources FEWS has not achieved great success in its local capacity building activities in Kenya There needs to be progress in the governments organizational and institutional setup before FEWS capacity building efforts can hope to make significant progress 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District-level data are collected by district level staff who are poorly trained in sampling or uniform measurement techniques • The Kenyan government information is aggregated at the provincial level and sent to Nairobi in aggregated form FEWS therefore has to collect district level data directly from the districts • Overestimation of food needs apparently linked to El Niño related predictions resulted in higher food imports than were in fact needed This was exacerbated by poorly timed and delayed food arrivals over-response by private importers and insufficient linkage between relief and development efforts which could have linked the additional food available to demand enhancing development efforts • More attention needs to be paid in the monthly vulnerability updates to issues of the relationship between short term issues related to where crises are emerging and who are the most vulnerable and long term issues of what should be done to reduce such vulnerability • There is not as much interaction with WFP and SCF/UK on vulnerability assessment preparation and use as there is in some other African countries More active interaction with the other major VA entities should be explored in Kenya • Proposed regional work on targeting of food aid to be undertaken in the GHA region may be taking the steam out of country VA efforts It is important that the scope of the regional work be defined as early as possible 		

Country Report Rwanda

Rwanda	FEWS initiated activity in 1996	1 AFFR
Located in SIAR in the Ministry of Agriculture supported by the RFFR in Uganda		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare monthly reports to FEWS/W on the food security situation in Rwanda • Undertake monthly field visits to food insecure areas and maintain close consultation with partner organizations • Participate in semi-annual crop assessments jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture SCF/UK FAO and WFP • Collect biweekly market prices 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly field visits by FEWS to food insecure areas enables the preparation of the monthly report to FEWS/W • EU technical advisor is using FEWS PRICEMAN software configured to fit with the local data format to collect biweekly price information from 33 markets on 34 commodities • The sharing of the semi annual crop assessment missions with the other major interested organizations has resulted in a single estimate of food aid needs and the absence of competing estimates common in many other FEWS-assisted countries • The FEWS monthly reporting is distributed to about 65 offices in Rwanda including USAID several in the Government of Rwanda UN Agencies bilateral donors and major NGOs Interviews suggested a high level of interest and utility among the recipients • During the recent visit of President Clinton to Rwanda FEWS briefing materials were used drawing considerable attention and praise • FEWS participates in regular briefings of USAID's Food for Peace and agricultural officers • FEWS participates in meetings of the National Food Committee Agricultural Inputs Committee the Thematic Group for Food Security and the Ad Hoc Committee for the North-West All present opportunities for involvement in response planning activities 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of the Food Security Technical Unit (SIAR) in the Ministry of Agriculture with FEWS as an integral part looks to provide a good basis for institutionalizing a development oriented response capability to Rwanda's serious food security problems • Given the scarcity of statistical data collection in the country the FEWS monthly reporting is based primarily on monthly field visits Selection of which areas to visit are based on i) reports of higher than normal price fluctuations ii) security risk iii) evidence of chronic food insecurity The statistical basis for determining relative food insecurity among sub populations however is very weak and the chance of not being aware of changes in underlying factors creating chronic food insecurity is correspondingly increased • The FEWS Representative is the de facto USAID food security advisor in the Ministry of Agriculture and also provides support to the development of USAID's food security and agriculture support program in Rwanda This support has proved so valuable that USAID is considering a buy-in to add a second professional staff member in the FEWS office • Because of the size and location of Rwanda links with research into regional cross border trade and regional food price comparisons needs to be strengthened Several sources suggested that data in these areas should be incorporated into the monthly bulletin This is further support for adding an additional FEWS professional • Presently FEWS prepares its own monthly bulletin with considerable input from its partners which it is widely agreed among users to be comprehensive and objective With the advent of SIAR of which FEWS is a part there are now plans for a single SIAR newsletter which would take the place of the FEWS monthly report (for internal purposes not for reporting to FEWS/W) it remains to be seen whether the objectivity of reporting will be compromised with this transition • There are several activities underway in Rwanda which could eventuate in a shared vulnerability assessment exercise SCF/UK is undertaking a vulnerability assessment based on a household food economy assessment model to be done in all districts of the country They envision the possibility of monthly mapping of vulnerable groups for the entire country by including FEWS information currently analyzed together with data forthcoming from their own household food economy assessments UNICEF is updating the national nutrition survey (with assistance from FEWS) There is ample evidence of interest and support from several organizations FEWS should participate fully 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDVI and other satellite imagery is not currently being used in Rwanda because of problems interpretation caused by Rwanda's mountainous topography and long periods of cloud cover At the same time most of the country's ground infrastructure for recording rainfall and temperature data were destroyed in the 1995-95 civil war FEWS/NASA and USGS should determine whether recent improvements in NDVI interpolation might be applied to Rwanda and if so how such skills might be transferred to Rwandan agro meteorologists • Vulnerability assessment work is undertaken informally as part of FEWS monthly reporting methodology There is now need to undertake a more formal VA in conformity with FEWS overall VA methodology • FEWS relies on many partners for data which is presented in its reporting It needs to acknowledge the source(s) of some of its reporting giving credit to the work and contribution of others • FEWS is now being presented with the opportunity to participate with USAID and Michigan State University in the strengthening of the Ministry of Agriculture's SIAR unit and other participating organizations in food security information gathering and analysis 		

Country Report Somalia

Somalia	FEWS initiated activity in 1996	2 AFFRs
Located in REDSO/EA Office Complex Nairobi		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relying on agro-meteorological satellite imagery supplemented by on the ground data to monitor emerging problems This task is made extremely difficult by a high degree of political insecurity and danger Monitoring food prices in 32 markets monitoring livestock sales and exports as an indirect indicator of household income monitoring crop/livestock terms-of-trade Participating in four annual crop assessments per year as part of the multi-donor supported Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) Provide regular briefings to USAID/Somalia [and now REDSO] and to the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Djibouti Prepare a monthly report Undertake in conjunction with Save the Children Foundation area specific vulnerability assessments using the food economy approach 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining a viable FEWS data gathering and reporting activity from neighboring Kenya Ground truthing of NDVI data has on occasion discovered problems which the imagery could not detect A vulnerability update for the Lower Juba Valley was published in October, 1996 FEWS/Somalia participated in an FSAU report on 'Vulnerable Groups and Areas in Somalia' in February 1997 FEWS/Somalia has developed good operating partnerships with all the organizations participating in food security information gathering FEWS need to publish its monthly reports regularly has limited its ability to increase the cooperative input into these reports Training in agriculture and marketing has been provided to the Government of Somaliland in the northern parts of Somalia FEWS reporting on the Saudi ban on imports of live animals from Somalia (due to an outbreak of livestock disease) helped the government of Somaliland to convince donors to provide assistance FEWS reporting on recent floods in the southern third of Somalia likewise helped inform donor responses 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEWS/Somalia activities provide an extremely valuable input for the UN/donor and NGO communities involved in relief and development in Somalia The high quality of reporting and the dedication to their job evinced by the two Assistant FEWS Field Representatives in undertaking on the ground assessments under difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances Vulnerability to experiencing serious food insecurity is presently being determined by locating areas and identifying populations based on their livelihood characteristics In the absence of baseline data and population movements in response to ongoing conflicts this appears to be a good approach The lack of all but the most minimal government in Somalia has made FEWS just about the only source of timely and reasonable accurate information about the food insecurity situation in the country Information contained in FEWS reporting fills an enormous gap Given the extremely high likelihood of famine conditions being experienced in Somalia and the capability which FEWS has demonstrated of tracking conditions in the country under quite difficult circumstances USAID funding of continued FEWS activities in Somalia should continue 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both FEWS and FSAU publish monthly reports which creates a dual reporting system There is need to find a way to combine them without sacrificing timeliness and quality Uncertainties about the future of USAID financial support to underwrite the costs of continuing to gather information about the situation in Somalia clouds the future of FEWS/Somalia 		

Country Report Southern Sudan

	FEWS initiated activity in 1994	1 AFFR
Located in REDSO/EA Office Complex		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather analyze and report on famine conditions under extremely difficult and complicated circumstances using mostly secondary data from the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA) Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) and local militias of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) Work with SRRA OLS and UN organizations especially WFP to ground truth remotely-sensed information on growing conditions pasture and livestock situations Given sporadic and anecdotal nature of the data work with all possible data sources including NGO monitors who gather information on agricultural production conditions prices population movements, conflict situations and where possible rainfall information In the Nairobi FEWS complex in REDSO/EA analyze the information coming from both satellite imagery and from Southern Sudan and prepare monthly reports for FEWSW and USAID on the famine situation and on factors increasing household vulnerability to famine Prepare monthly 2-page Southern Sudan Update in collaboration with WFP/FEAU Attend numerous donor meetings on Southern Sudan both in Nairobi and in Lokichokio in Northwestern Kenya near the Sudan border 		
<u>Accomplishments</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of numerous timely reports from sketchy and unreliable primary data has been of considerable use during the present famine emergency FEWS-S Sudan reporting and capacity building appears to have had a favorable impact on the ability of the relief and development community working in the region to respond to emerging food insecurity Even though there are physical and logistics constraints which can severely hamper responses (as has tragically been the case in recent weeks) the awareness of impending problems has helped in program planning oriented to enhancing over the longer term peoples self reliance Developing a broad and active network of (mostly NGO) informants to provide as much information and data as possible FEWS-S Sudan has trained SRRA and WFP on the-ground monitors in collecting and analyzing market prices rainfall population displacement and crop performance and has facilitated refinement of techniques in their application in the region SRRA Now aims to produce monthly reports patterned on monthly FEWS country reports to highlight situations in selected high risk areas 		
<u>Evaluative Commentary</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEWS Southern Sudan early warning reports are well received and have been found to be very useful by the NGO organizations working in Southern Sudan The reporting has been both timely and as accurate as possible under these extremely difficult circumstances A review of past FEWS <i>Bulletins</i> shows that information about the numbers of people suffering the increasing food deficit situation deteriorating crop and livestock conditions and serious transport logistics and problems was published in a timely manner The Southern Sudan situation was the lead story in the April 28, 1998 <i>Bulletin</i> The extensive partnership within which FEWS operates and the manner in which FEWS has been able to use that partnership to extract data and information is to be commended It may be useful for FEWS to examine the usefulness of the WFP/SCF-UK food economy as a qualitatively-oriented model for undertaking vulnerability assessments for Southern Sudan which are more participatory and thereby providing a possibly improved model for responding to local needs which would include resources other than food aid Integrating early warning information with the vulnerability analysis of these partners could enhance response capability substantially 		
<u>Issues</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A July 1998 article in <i>Time</i> magazine suggests that senior US officials are unhappy with USAID over the quality and timeliness of USAID reporting on the Sudan famine As FEWS reporting is the principal source of USAID's information on the region this could be viewed as accusing FEWS of not reporting in a timely and comprehensive manner about the situation in Southern Sudan After reviewing FEWS reporting on Southern Sudan especially in the period from mid March 1998 the Evaluation Team concludes that to the contrary FEWS reports on the Southern Sudan situation were both timely and as accurate as conditions allowed This reporting showed evidence of a late start to the rainy season areas of poor production in the previous year and where communities were especially vulnerable as a result Its subsequent reporting confirmed the existence of drought which led to WFP's July 7 1998 decision to allocate additional emergency food supplies to the region The NGO partners who provide FEWS with much of the information about conditions in Southern Sudan would like some acknowledgement of their role in FEWS reports Because of the political conflict the remoteness of the region and resultant transport constraints there is no viable development program to which FEWS can contribute in terms of attempting to better relate relief to development USAID's own involvement is quite limited Food aid is largely through WFP and the NGOs with some food coming directly from OFDA The Team felt that FEWS S Sudan could improve its working relations with REDSO/EA which has Food for Peace and OFDA responsibilities FEWS links with the OLS seem to be closer 		

Country Report Tanzania

FEWS initiated activity in 1996		1 AFFR
Located in the Ministry of Agriculture Food Security Department		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares remotely sensed data with the Ministry of Agriculture • Prepares monthly food security reports for FEWS/W • Assists with capacity building of government donor and NGO colleagues in areas such as improved computer software use and GIS mapping • Briefed USAID and Embassy on drought and El Nifio related flooding 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEWS/Tanzania has been producing an extensive monthly analysis of changes in the data and indicators related to the food security situation • Worked with WFP to draft guidelines and questionnaires for food needs overseas which have been used by interagency teams since September 1996 • During 1997 and 1998 first drought and then El Nifio floods created a year of crisis for Tanzania FEWS reporting provided USAID with sufficient quality information to be in a position to respond appropriately to these situations • FEWS/Tanzania has developed a proposal for USAID/GHAI funding to support the FSD in the task of strengthening the capacities of its district network 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanzania has a relatively good information base and institutional capacity to utilize imagery information and on the-ground data as well as good cooperation between the government UN agencies and NGOs all of whom participate in crop and food needs assessments The main contribution that FEWS reporting has provided in this environment is its superior analysis of the situation largely embodied in the experience of AFFR His careful analysis for example helped to point out the presence of pockets of surplus production in an otherwise drought-affected country in the aftermath of a poor 1997 season This led to a reduced estimate of food needs from 30 000 mt to 3 000 mt The analysis also helped direct food aid to geographic areas where it was needed most • To date no comprehensive vulnerability assessment has been carried out in Tanzania though there have been extensive discussions for much of the past year Its slow progress may be a function of the poor quality of the data available FEWS VA efforts should be increased in concert with work already underway by WFPNAM and SCF/UK The key should be to focus on the analytical capacity and orienting food insecurity responses towards longer term development needs in targeted areas rather than a one shot effort to gather yet more data on characteristics of vulnerable population groups and geographic areas • There seems to be a propensity to think primarily of food aid as the answer to food security problems in Tanzania Long run responses need to go beyond food aid and be better integrated into decision making along with training for such analysis • FEWS reports are used by the National Disaster Committee – particularly its sub committee on food emergencies – to advise the Prime Minister in times of food security distress The secretariat of this committee would like to see vulnerability assessments completed to compliment FSD forecasts They are also interested in greater interactions with FEWS and are in the process of improving their capacity in planning and research related to preparedness and mitigation with financial assistance from UNDP and technical support and training likely to come from FEWS 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AFFR has been careful to limit the distribution of his monthly country reporting to a select few users within the donor and government community because of possible conflicts with government estimates of food aid needs • Stringent budget constraints faced by all government departments makes it extremely difficult for the government to support the costs of the food security department and of the needed strengthening of the network of district level units As is the case in several other countries visited by the evaluation sub teams the donors should concert their support for strengthening information gathering and analysis in order to target resources with greater focus and greater efficiency 		

Country Report Uganda

	FEWS initiated activity in 1996	1 AFFR (Mission buy-in)
Located in offices shared with the USAID-financed IDEA Project		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect primary and secondary data about the food security situation in Uganda and prepare reports for FEWS/W and local use • Engage in strengthening of the professional capacities of staff of the national Early Warning Unit • Collaborate with WFP FAO NGOs the National Early Warning and Food Information System (NEWFIS) and other donors in gathering and sharing information on food security indicators • Carry out vulnerability assessments • Engage in special studies as part of USAID's Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHA) • Gather information on market prices direction of food commodity flows within Uganda and across Uganda's borders 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathered agro-climatological food market food movement and related primary and secondary data and fashioned it into monthly reports distributed to approximately 100 users in Uganda and to FEWS/W for use in the <i>Bulletin</i> • Helped strengthen a very resource poor early warning unit in the Ministry of Agriculture • Produced a combined baseline-current vulnerability assessment and at the time of the Team visit was readying itself for an August 1998 follow up VA • Provided technical assistance and guidance to NGO professionals in EW assessment techniques and rapid rural appraisal (RRA) techniques • Completed special reporting for USAID and the donor community • WFP stated to the Evaluation Team that FEWS monthly reporting is extremely helpful to their operations since there is no comparable source of timely and credible information in the country either in or out of government • Large private trading entities in Uganda – Louis Dreyfus Exatrade Glencoe – are enthusiastic users of FEWS reporting to track food availability and projections of food flows 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall the Evaluation Team found that FEWS early warning activities in Uganda were widely respected and very much heeded by all parties dealing with issues of food security Government officials were very appreciative of FEWS technical assistance and capacity building efforts • The Mission provides support to the FEWS AFFR from local currency generated under its PL 480 Title II monetization program carried out by ACDI/VOCA who have also participated in capacity-building efforts which support FEWS objectives This is a particularly good example of a FEWS program which is well integrated into the overall USAID country program – one in which individual projects provide considerable support to each other's objectives • In meetings with the Team government officials noted a number of areas of collaboration with FEWS which had been of considerable benefit to the government These included frequent exchanges of information between government and FEWS staffs technical training provided by FEWS collaboration in field assessment and monitoring activities They noted that a number of district officials now utilize food security information provided by FEWS in their local planning activities • Capacity building has been limited largely to the six-person staff of NEWFIS who seem to have maintained fairly high morale despite a low level of government funding for their activities • There is a long way to go before there is a sustained capacity in Uganda – shared between the public and private sectors – to respond with alacrity to shocks and to the long term factors impeding access to adequate food by many of Uganda's poorer households Considering the complexity of the problems the near total lack of good baseline data and of funding needed to reinvigorate a quality data-gathering capacity plus the relative newness of FEWS there is considerably more to be accomplished particularly in capacity building and institutional strengthening before Uganda will be adequately endowed with its own data gathering analysis and response planning capacity 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paucity of good information from official Ugandan Government sources is particularly noteworthy even in comparison to other FEWS countries where official data are not reliable This is in part a legacy of domestic political turmoil during the Amin Regime the surcease in data gathering for many years the loss of technically competent supervisory and technical staffs and the resultant requirement for government data gathering to start virtually afresh This together with continued budget stringency has made it doubly difficult for the Ugandan government to take more concrete steps to improve its various agro meteorological crop livestock market nutrition household income and other data collection activities • The Department of Meteorology feels that FEWS products are of high quality and generally useful but would like greater collaboration both in data collection (they suffer from a lack of resources such as radios for reporting) and in issuing forecasts Their greatest concern relates to public issuance of rainfall season forecasts (by FEWS or others) that might conflict with their own FEWS should attempt to insure that their own meteorological forecasts are provided first to the meteorological department for the department to use in making forecasts 		

3 Southern Africa

Country Report Malawi

Malawi	FEWS initiated activity in Oct 1993	1 CFFR 1 AFFR (Mission buy in)
Located in Agro economic Survey Ministry of Agriculture		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build database repository of food security data • Important component in production of crop survey reports These are the most important local FEWS product Highly praised by donors private sector and NGOs as a greatly improved source of quality information on food availability and prospects • Prepare VAM baseline and undertake repeat VAs • Train government and non-government personnel in improved data collection analysis use of statistical and GIS mapping tools and in rapid appraisal and VA techniques 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcame early suspicion of motives and reluctance to share government data forged close working relationship with National Early Warning System (NEWS) • Contributed directly to improved reliability of crop estimates • Helped establish and strengthen the National Steering Committee on Food Security chaired by the PS Finance • Helped develop an NGO Food Security Network • Undertook with WFP a vulnerability assessment ("A Quest for Causality" - 1996) which is now being used by government donors and NGOs for targeting of assistance on most vulnerable population groups • Trained ACDI/VOCA project staff in GIS mapping techniques which are being used to better track that USAID financed projects ability to improve smallholder income levels • According to one senior government officer FEWS has significantly improved the governments ability to plan and implement its development agenda by clarifying options and allowing for consideration for the first time of the impact on vulnerable population groups of different proposed options • The recently designed Fourth Household Survey used FEWS data and analysis to identify vulnerable groups for in-depth surveys • The World Bank-financed Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) uses the VAM to target its public works activities 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEWS has done a good job in Malawi in establishing its credentials for objectivity and quality of its products Without a single exception all interviewees praised the contribution of FEWS to the improved quality and timeliness of crop survey and monitoring information There is great respect and admiration for what FEWS does and the high level of competence displayed in its accomplishment • FEWS use of computer and GIS technology to marry satellite and ground data has caused a major shift in expectations on the part of decision-makers in government They are no longer satisfied with the poor quality gap filled late and inaccurate information that prevailed in the pre FEWS era They have come to expect timely data of high quality This change in expectations and mind sets represents true <i>institutional</i> development in the Malawian context and is directly attributable to FEWS operations in Malawi • The joint FEWS/WFP Vulnerability Assessment is a if not the primary targeting mechanism employed by government donors and NGOs in targeting of development projects • FEWS has done a first rate job of developing the capacity of its Malawian staff and then turning over full responsibility of operating the FEWS program in Malawi to these staff Unlike the other country operations in Southern Africa the Malawi office reports directly to FEWS/W rather than through the RFFR in Harare • The local USAID Mission has provided a buy-in enabling the addition of one Assistant FEWS Field Representative to focus on gathering and analyze primary and secondary data related to producer wholesale and consumer food prices internal and external trade patterns and other aspects of household incomes among the food insecure poor They are considering sponsoring a move of the FEWS office from its present government premises to a site at Bunda College 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid loss in soil fertility particularly nitrogen is contributing to reduced cereal yields in Malawi Should FEWS attempt to monitor loss in soil fertility as a significant contributing factor in reducing household food security? • High turnover in Malawian government staff trained in improved data gathering and analysis by FEWS Training must be repeated fairly often as new Malawian staff appear • There is some evidence to suggest increased consumption of root crops (especially cassava) and reduced dependence on maize Cassava yield data has come under criticism as being exaggerated (and rising food insecurity downplayed as a result of over optimistic forecasts of caloric availability) • It was suggested that the donor grouping on agriculture and food security could profit from further involvement by the FEWS staff in its own efforts • There was some concern that the FAO FIVIMS initiative once launched in Malawi could be a source of confusion rather than clarification as it would seem to want to undertake many of the same activities as FEWS is already doing • The heightened concern over the El Niño (ENSO) event and the consequent absence of the severe drought that had been widely predicted and advertised was viewed by some of the interviewees as a possible net negative for the future The farmers will not believe you next time was a common theme in several of the interviews 		

Country Report Mozambique

Mozambique	FEWS initiated activity in 1997	1 AFFR
Located in Ministry of Agriculture s Early Warning Unit		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting on the-ground data for the FEWS monthly report to Washington Providing technical assistance and training in data gathering and analysis techniques Providing training in GIS mapping Being a moving force together with the regional WFP VAM officer in producing the first VA in Mozambique 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated with government and non government organizations to gather and analyze food security-related data for early warning purposes Participated with WFP the NGO community and several units of the Mozambican government to produce the first vulnerability assessment Preparations are well underway for the first follow up VA Has participated in the various committees and working groups which have nearly completed formulation of the Mozambican governments policy positions on food security and disaster preparedness As such the FEWS representative has become increasingly participatory in virtually all of the major exercises relating to food security issues in the country 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the FEWS presence in Mozambique is the most recent established of all FEWS offices in Sub-Saharan Africa the AFFR has gotten off to an excellent start for three primary reasons i) given his background and good communications skills he is a first rate choice for the job ii) the FEWS RFFR in Harare had done a considerable amount of advance preparation work with the government and the various NGO and donor groups and iii) the government donors and NGOs had with the ending of internal warfare in 1994 already launched a number of programs to improve food security in many parts of war torn Mozambique In effect the FEWS AFFR was able to catch a train that was already leaving the station As with several FEWS posts there is too much to do – too many meetings to attend too much semi-arid country to cover too much analysis to prepare and reports to be drafted too many briefings to be held – for one professional to be able to handle it all Until very recently Mozambique was considered by the United Nations to be the most food insecure country in the world The economy was nearly totally devastated by 17 years of war the road net is almost non-existent as are public services The rural areas are particularly vulnerable to droughts and food shortages caused by transport and storage difficulties A second FEWS professional is clearly needed in this situation A potential problem is the relation between the FEWS mandate and the local USAID missions Strategic Objectives The Evaluation Team was informed by senior Mission staff that improved food security is not a USAID Mission Strategic Objective in Mozambique Difficult as this is to comprehend in a country so food insecure it may underlie the clear sense the Team received from the Mission that the FEWS presence in Mozambique while welcome is considered a USAID/Washington sponsored intervention not one chosen by the Mission This in the Teams view has created a sense in the Mission that FEWS and its mandate is for them quite low on the priority scale The relationship between the FEWS representative and the regional WFP VAM officer have been particularly productive The VA exercise was of critical importance in Mozambique given the paucity of baseline data caused by the war While there was initial skepticism among other donor and NGO organizations about the utility of the VA and of its methodology all such organizations are said to have become quite supportive now that the first VA is available and enabling improved targeting for further analysis if not the transfer of development resources 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a decided lack of USAID/Mozambique and USAID/Washington assistance in clearing a FEWS purchased 4 wheel drive vehicle through Mozambican customs or in determining how duties and taxes are to be paid The FEWS representative is constrained from travel in some of the more remote areas which are not well served by the road net This is symptomatic of a general lack of official USG support to FEWS in terms of the official status of project staff and project commodities in each of the countries in which FEWS operates This issue in not that FEWS staff require any particular status it is that whatever that status is it needs to be clarified in several countries where FEWS is active This is particularly important in countries where there is no USAID mission FAO financial support for the Ministry of Agriculture's Early Warning Unit has been interrupted This stems from a problem in European Union (EU) headquarters in Brussels which provides funds to FAO for its EW-related support in a number of African countries In the meantime the Mozambican head of the EW unit informed the Team that unless there is bridging finance from somewhere the government will not be able to continue to pay the costs of the EW unit – particularly those of its provincial and district level staff and operating expenses This will make the data gathering and reporting tasks of the FEWS representative even more difficult for at least several months 		

Country Report Zambia

Zambia	FEWS initiated activity in 1992	1 AFFR 1 Food security specialist
Office space is separate from government and USAID		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and evaluate data related to crop situation and prepared monthly reports on these and related data • Prepare jointly with WFP the baseline and follow up vulnerability assessments • Assist USAID review UN family and NGO food aid proposals • Determine training and other capacity building requirements of the NEWU • As part of a Mission buy in prepared reports on cross border food trade and on local producer and consumer cereals prices 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and analyzing on-the-ground crop assessment data from primary and secondary sources and prepared the monthly reports to FEWS/W • Participated in baseline VA preparation and the 1997 current Vulnerability Assessment update • Collaboration with FHANIS on household survey and food security survey design and implementation • Has undertaken market price and food trade analysis as a component of the USAID/Mission buy in 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEWS is operating in a situation of a declining commitment by the government to its own EW data gathering and analysis system. The government's monthly national early warning report is no longer being produced. The Ministry of Agriculture has been faced with serious staff turnover and poor morale caused by staffing uncertainties. • Liberalization has had a profound effect on household food security in Zambia. Some of the effect has been positive – especially for those smallholder farmers who are increasingly able to participate in the cash economy by producing more marketable products. This is more true as has always been the case in Zambia for those near reasonably good road or rail transport especially in the central and eastern parts of the country. However the benefits from liberalization have not spread as far or as fast into the northern and western sections of Zambia where nutrition and household survey data still show profoundly troubling levels of poverty and malnutrition – in truth among the worst in Sub Saharan Africa. The Team believes on the basis of its interviews in Zambia there is a tendency among some donors – notably the US and the Dutch donor representatives – to believe that in privatization lies the answer to all ills. If supported the private sector has the capacity to grow sufficiently rapidly to create the conditions whereby Zambia as a whole can successfully confront the conditions causing poverty. There is a proclivity to assign much that has resulted in serious poverty in Zambia to public sector incompetence and interference in the economy i.e. to a history of inappropriate public policy. Thus attempts to bolster improvements in public sector performance even in areas which are arguably better performed by public sector agencies seem to be viewed with suspicion verging on hostility by these donors. While in full agreement that private sector growth is to be encouraged the Team believes that grappling with the causes of food insecurity in the short to medium (1-10 years) term also requires efforts to strengthen the relevant public agencies. FHANIS and NFNC are examples. It is hoped that USAID/Zambia will positively support FEWS efforts to do so. • The National Food and Nutrition Commission (NFNC) is working on a Nutrition Information System to capture the effects on nutrition status of changes in food production health education and other socioeconomic household-focused data. It is important that FEWS participate fully in this important data gathering and analysis exercise which is being supported by UNICEF. • There are a number of trends in Zambia that bear watching. It is clear that many smallholders are attempting to earn added income by engaging in cash crop farming. It is quite unclear at this point whether enough are doing so to be signaling improvement in average household incomes or whether they are earning enough from these endeavors to have more than made up for lost food production. FEWS analysis will be critical to understanding the impact of deep-seated economic changes on the lives and livelihoods of rural food insecure households. 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEWS participated in the joint FAO/WFP Crop Assessment but was not allowed to view the final draft of the Report before it was vetted with government and published. FEWS (as well as most of the donors) do not agree with the reports conclusions about the maize harvest and food aid requirements. • There is strong evidence to suggest that the consumption patterns of the 1970s 80s and 90s may be reverting to those of the 1960s when root crops such as sweet potatoes and cassava were larger components of the diet and maize was less so than has been the case for most of the past three decades. If so it is likely that donor-financed surveys of food availability may focus too heavily on cereals and miss increasing production and consumption of non-cereals. • There appear to be internal problems within the most important NGO umbrella organization in Zambia the Program Against Malnutrition (PAM). If it is unable in the future to provide the important linking facility among the key national and international NGOs and between the NGOs as a group and the government and donors FEWS may need to work with the NGOs to form an alternative cooperative framework in order to prevent costly duplication of data gathering and analysis and improved coordination and sharing of objectives methods and resultant data. 		

Country Report Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe	FEWS initiated activity in 1992	1 AFFR 1 shared secretary
Located in office with Regional FFR separate from government and USAID		
Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and expand a repository of food security related databases • Prepare a monthly report on status of food security in Zimbabwe • Participate in preparation of vulnerability assessments • Provide training and technical assistance both to government and to NGO staff • Provide satellite imagery to the meteorological department 		
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEWS/Zimbabwe has continued to provide quality data and information on the state of food insecurity in the country under difficult political circumstances. Monthly reporting has been timely and complete • The first vulnerability assessment has been completed – again under trying circumstances • Local NGOs have been strengthened in their ability to use FEWS techniques in gathering information about the food security status of households in geographic areas where they are working. FEWS rapid appraisal techniques have been used to investigate the food security status of agriculture workers in the estate sector 		
Evaluative Commentary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Zimbabwean government has been difficult to work with during the past two years. Its responsibilities have become fractured, staff turnover is high, morale is low. It has been difficult for FEWS to find government agencies with which to collaborate • It has proved difficult to work with the government on vulnerability assessments. While the name of the EW unit in the Ministry of Agriculture is on the first VA, they in fact had little to do with its preparation. Nonetheless, FEWS is trying to build up credibility of the VA process and gradually infuse it with the capacity to influence the allocative decision processes both in government and in the donor and NGO communities. Just publishing the first VA has been a major accomplishment, but there is a long way to go before it will be capable of influencing policy. • The USAID Mission gives the local FEWS staff high marks, calling it the best tool we have in gathering food security related information which has been used on numerous occasions by the Mission Director and others in meetings with the government. • FEWS staff appear to have little, if any, influence on Zimbabwean decision-makers. FEWS relations with the government are almost entirely at the working level, e.g. with the staffs of the EW unit in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Meteorological Department. There has been little contact with senior policy officials in the Ministry of Agriculture or in the planning and budgeting ministries. 		
Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zimbabwe's Early Warning Unit is particularly weak, deeply buried in the Ministry of Agriculture bureaucracy, far from policy levels of government. • Considerable turn over of staff in Zimbabwean government concerned with early warning. • There have been attempts at political interference with the findings of the vulnerability assessment. Some elected officials do not want the VA to suggest targeting districts and towns other than those they represent. This situation has in turn led to caution in the distribution of VA results and other information about the geographical distribution of vulnerability to food insecurity. • The FEWS Bulletin has only very limited distribution in Zimbabwe since it is FEWS policy in the region to support the development and continuing improvement of the SADC Monthly Bulletin which FEWS regional staff have helped develop. 		

Annex B Country Summary Information by Region

1 Southern Africa

Country	Malawi	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Mozambique
Staff	Sam Chimwaza CFFR Evanse Chapasuka AFFR	Chansa Musinge AFFR Ballard Zulu AFFR	Gary Eilerts RFFR Eliot Vhurumuku AFFR	Joao Manja AFFR
Established	1993 non host country request	1993	May 1992	December 1996
Location	Agro Economic Survey Ministry of Agriculture	USAID office for projects in downtown Lusaka	Separate Office	NEWU National Directorate of Agriculture Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
NEWS	yes	Yes	Yes	yes
Food Security Steering Committee (FSC)	Ministry of Finance Ministry of Agriculture National Economic Council USAID EU UNDP DANIDA WFP FAO FEWS	Government (Ministry of Agriculture CSO FHANIS FEWS and WFP) Donors (WFP USAID EU UN agencies embassies)	Government (inter ministerial committee meets during droughts) Donors (committee organized by UNDP also meets when drought)	There is a Government headed committee comprising Ministries Donors and NGOs
(FSC)	mandate not specified 1997 3 meetings thru May 1998 - 1 meeting where 3 sub committees (food security market access and soil fertility) were formed	mandate not specified Government group meets almost monthly Donors meet at least quarterly	National Food Security Policy has been in draft form for several years all stakeholders should be meeting regularly but this is not done	The Food Security and Nutrition Strategy is targeted for completion in Sep 1998 (includes part on committees)
USG contact	USAID ADO uses FEWS info for quarterly food security cables and regular donor meetings - information is highly regarded as best available	USAID ADO attends regular donor meetings and receives and utilizes FEWS bulletins and price information	USAID Supervisory General Development Officer FEWS drafts the regular food security cables and other special food security reports	USAID Food for Peace Officer FEWS sometimes provides data or reviews cables
Vulnerability Assessment	1996 in collaboration with WFP Jan 1998 FEWS	FEWS has participated on all vulnerability assessments the next which will be conducted in June 1998	The Current Food Security Analysis for 1997/98 was carried out by FEWS in association with NEWU Jan 1998	1997/98 Vulnerability Assessment completed in March 1998 as a collaborative effort
Crop Assessment	Last assessment - Feb 1998 in collaboration with FAO	May 1998 a report was produced solely by FAO FEWS was listed as a collaborator (field trip participant) without concurrence on final report	The 1997/98 crop assessment was the first time that GOZ included other parties (FEWS WFP and Zimbabwe Farmers Union) to participate	The last crop assessment was completed in April 1998 with FEWS and active participant

2 Western Sahel

Country	Western Sahel Regional Office	Burkina Faso	Mali	Mauritania
Staff	Kevin Sturr RFFR	Joseph Sedgo AFFR	Salif Sow CFFR (original rep)	Sy Hamady Samba AFFR (original rep)
Established		1985	1985	1986
Location	Bamako Mali	Private Office	USAID	US Embassy GSO compound
NEWS		no	yes SAP (strong relationship with GOM)	Partial (non-functional group SISAAR)
Food Security Steering Committee (FSC)		yes Minister of Agriculture minister of Social Affairs UNDP WFP embassies and NGOs	Donors FEWS/Dipper SIM SAP Ag Stat DMBEV (livestock office)	All embassies FEWS WFP FAO EU CSA MRDE
(FSC)		bi weekly meetings	2 meeting were held in 1997 versus 2 meeting during the first 2 months of 1998	5 meetings were held in 1997 versus 6 meeting during the first 5 months of 1998
USG contact		DCM US embassy	No direct USG supervision but meet with SO leader FEWS sometimes assists with food security cables	DCM US Embassy Information provided to the embassy which they use at their discretion
Vulnerability Assessment		Annual	VA done with SAP (NEWU) -strong working relationship with FEWS	Annual (improving WFP relationships)
Crop Assessment		included in VA	FEWS participated in the last crop assessment - Oct 97	Participated with FAO on the 1997/98 crop assessment

3 Eastern Sahel

Country	Chad	Niger
Staff	Alkhalil Adoum AFFR	Mesrak T Meskel CFFR (original rep)
Established	1986	1985
Location	Private Office	Private Office
NEWS	There is a national early warning (SAP) unit which is entirely dependent upon unpredictable EU funding	Yes SAP
Food Security Steering Committee (FSC)	Action Committee for Food Security in Catastrophes (CASAGC)	The food security committee is made up of representative of USAID EU Germany WFP National Cereals Office, French Cooperation and members of the Prime Minister's Cabinet
(FSC)	The committee met 4 times in 1997 and 7 times during the first 5 months of 1998	During 1997 there were ad hoc meeting but since December 1997 there have been monthly donor meeting with biweekly committee meetings that prepare the agenda for the monthly donor meetings
USG contact	Democracy and Development Advisor US Embassy FEWS provides the embassy with information which they use at their discretion	USAID representative
Vulnerability Assessment	Last vulnerability assessment conducted in Feb Mar 1998 (no close link with WFP)	close working relationship with WFP on VAM (locating FEWS within WFP might be advantageous)
Crop Assessment	FEWS participated on the 1997 crop assessment mission with FAO	FEWS participated on the last crop assessment which was completed in October 1997

4 Horn and Eastern Africa

Country	Ethiopia	Kenya	Rwanda	Somalia
Staff	Taffese Olkeba AFFR Daniel Molla AFFR	Nancy Mutunga CFFR	Serge Rwamasirabo AFFR	Philip Steffen CFFR A H Shirwa AFFR S I Addou AFFR
Established	1993 field office opened after 2 years of prior coverage from Washington	1991	May 1996	June 1995 USAID Somalia executed a buy-in which is being completed
Location	USAID	USAID/REDSO office	Ministry of Agriculture	USAID Somalia office in Nairobi
NEWS	yes Early Warning Department in the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC)	yes (NEWU) but non functional	no but a Food Security Technical Unit is in the process of being formed	no since no central government
Food Security Steering Committee (FSC)	Early Warning Working Group with representatives from USAID (FEWS) DPPC MOA Met Service (NMSA) CSA SCF/UK SCF/US WFP UN/EUE CIDA British Aid EU and CARE	Relief Committee chaired by WFP which includes other donors NGOs and GOK Policy Committee chaired by WFP/FAO which includes donors NGOs and private sector	Thematic Team for Food Security UNICEF FAO MOA MFEP UNDP USAID/FEWS WHO WFP CARE World Vision	Somalia Aid Coordinating Body (SACB) includes donors UN agencies and NGOs Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) - technical advisory unit to which FEWS belongs
(FSC)	Monthly meetings have been held both in 1997 and 1998	Monthly meetings have been held both in 1997 and 1998	Monthly meetings have been held both in 1997 and 1998	Monthly meetings have been held both in 1997 and 1998
USG contact	USAID FHA Officer FEWS always works closely with USAID in the preparation of food security cables	USAID ABEO REDSO Chief Food for Peace FEWS sometimes works with USAID in the preparation of food security cables	USAID Health Officer FEWS provides input to all food security cables	USAID Director
Vulnerability Assessment	First VA should be completed in September 1998 as a collaborative effort with WFP and the EU	FEWS participated on a pastoral VA in 1997 and complete VA is scheduled for completion in August 98	Never awaiting the establishment of the Food Security Technical Committee	Never AFFR travel frequently to Somalia
Crop Assessment	Last assessment - Nov 1997 in collaboration with FAO	Last assessment by FAO was June 1997 and FEWS only provided info to FAO	FEWS participated with FAO in the 1997/1998 crop assessments - completed Feb and June 1998	FSAU carries out the crop assessment which is essentially a FEWS/WFP operation

4 Horn and Eastern Africa (cont)

Country	Southern Sudan	Tanzania	Uganda
Staff	Janet Omoro AFFR	Vdeasto Rutachokoziwba, AFFR	Andrew Mutenge AFFR
Established	1994 through an OFDA buy in	Aprnl 1996	August 1996
Location	REDSO/EA	Food Security Department Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives	Shared building with USAID IDEA project
NEWS	no	yes	National Early Warning and Food Information Unit (staff without operational funds)
Food Security Steering Committee (FSC)	no	Yes Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives Prime Ministers Office WFP USAID EU SCF/UK Caritas	no
(FSC)		7 meeting held in 1997 and monthly meeting during the first 5 months of 1998	
USG contact	REDSO/USAID Chief FFP Officer	USAID Strategic Objective Support Team Leader FEWS always works closely with USAID in preparing Food Security cables	USAID Project Officer FEWS provided information is widely used
Vulnerability Assessment	no	No	1997
Crop Assessment	WFP does an annual needs assessment in collaboration with their partners	Last assessment with FAO was completed in Feb 1998	Last crop assessment was completed Feb 97

Annex C The FEWS Cooperating Partner Agencies

1 The U S Geological Survey (USGS)

The USGS Earth Resource Observation System (EROS) Data Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota provides support to the FEWS Project in 1) data archiving and data distribution, ii) data integration and processing, iii) data management software, and iv) GIS technologies

USGS views its role in the project as the “data integration” medium with NASA and NOAA as the data providers, and FEWS as the data consumer USGS has responsibilities in four areas 1) processing the data into formats usable by FEWS, 2) archiving and distribution of historical data, and 3) researching and developing new data analysis techniques, 4) software tool development

The *data processing* role of EROS is well developed and functions smoothly Every ten days USGS receives the data from NASA and NOAA, runs a series of batch processes, then delivers it directly to the FEWS server in Washington There are no known problems with this phase of the operations The *data dissemination* role has evolved out of EROS’ historical association with FEWS since Phase I Over time, a large volume of data has been archived at EROS Due to an increasing number of requests for access to these data they created the African Data Dissemination Service Web Site¹⁴ where the FEWS data base has been posted for general use This includes all of the imagery, tabular data and the data management software The site has been receiving approximately 1000 data requests per month, about 10 percent of them originating in Africa

Evaluative Comment There is one major issue regarding the data base Several years ago, NASA proposed to reprocess the NDVI database to make it more internally consistent All of the interested parties (NASA, NOAA, ARD, and USGS) got together and agreed upon a new map projection and other image parameters In April 1998, NASA informed ARD and USGS that, as a result of other obligations, they have decided to reprocess the historical data with other than the agreed upon parameters (a different map projection, and a 15 day aggregation period rather than the 10 day aggregation period historically used by FEWS), but they have not yet received their first data sets If the data are found to be incompatible, NASA will eventually reprocess to their standards, but it is not a high priority for them It is recommended that ARD, USGS and USAID meet with appropriate NASA personnel to insure that compatible data and imagery be maintained

A number of activities are underway in their research and development role USGS is continuing to develop the data management software RAINMAN, AGMAN, SPACEMAN and PRICEMAN, and is in the midst of developing its “Crop Water Satisfaction Index” This is based on an FAO crop water accounting model Currently, the model integrates evapotranspiration demand, rainfall, and ground water supply to arrive at a moisture balance USGS staff are working to add a crop stage index component to the model The other major effort, just now underway, is a “Flood Risk Assessment Model” This is in response to the heavy

¹⁴ The URL is <http://edcintl.cr.usgs.gov/adds/adds.html>

1997/98 flooding that occurred in East Africa. The plan is to integrate the Meteosat RFE data, a digital elevation model, hydrologic data (flow direction, flow length), land cover data, and soils data to identify basins with high flood risk potentials. USGS will be hiring a person with hydrology/GIS skills to carry out the model development.

Data in the **USGS** archives are provided by ARD, ISTI, OALS, NASA, and NOAA and is constantly being updated. The data is available to FEWS/ARD project staff, African meteorological services and other interested parties. Much of it is available on the FEWS website or the websites of the participating agencies. The datasets include

- All the international boundaries, and internal administrative boundaries are now based upon the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Digital Chart of the World (DCW) data set. Other thematic layers (e.g. soils) have been integrated to DCW but have yet to be released pending completion of metadata analysis.
- Difference images. Users may display the difference between two images.
- New user interface for the NDVI images that will allow a user to display an NDVI difference image.
- Rainfall estimate data.
- Geographical metadata searching.
- And the following FEWS Data Managers
 - PRICEMAN - FEWS Price Data Manager for MS Windows
Tabular Price data sets (PRICEMAN format)
 - RAINMAN - FEWS Rainfall Data Manager for MS Windows
Tabular Precipitation data sets (RAINMAN format)
 - AGMAN - FEWS Agricultural Data Manager for MS Windows
Tabular Agricultural data sets (AGMAN format)
 - SPACEMAN - FEWS Image statistics Data Manager

2 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NOAA has been an important partner in FEWS' efforts to strengthen and refine the use of climatological data in observing conditions leading to droughts and famines and other shocks in Sub-Saharan Africa.

NOAA has created the Africa Desk in its Climate Prediction Center (CPC) in order to develop a partnership program between CPC and the African Meteorological and Climatic Services. From the U.S. point of view, there is a need to evaluate the performance of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) global forecast models, particularly in the tropics. **From** the African point of view, there is a need to train African scientists with state of the art methods of climate monitoring and prediction. The African Desk conducts various programs, including (1) training, (2) climate product development and dissemination, (3) 10-day climate monitoring, (4) seasonal rainfall prediction, and (5) research. Ground and upper air observations retrieved from the CPC data bases and satellite measurements serve as a basis for the African Desk mission.

Ten day estimates of accumulated precipitation for the portion of the African continent south of 20°N are prepared operationally at the CPC for USAID as a part of FEWS. These estimates are archived and disseminated by USGS from the Earth Resources Observation Systems (EROS) Data Center to assist in drought monitoring efforts for the sub-Saharan portion of the African continent.

Due to the less than optimal density of the rain gauge network over the African continent, precipitation is not adequately measured, necessitating the use of a statistical algorithm for precipitation estimation. The method utilized by the CPC augments the available surface data with remotely sensed data in order to produce estimates of accumulated precipitation.

NOAA undertakes meteorological analyses for FEWS. And makes graphics of meteorological parameters available which are prepared with the use of surface observations and numerical model analyses. Surface observations obtained via the Global Telecommunication System (GTS) are used for the analyses of the surface temperature. Numerical model analyses from the Environmental Modeling Center (EMC) Global Data Assimilation System (GDAS), are used to create the analyses of surface relative humidity and winds.

Streamlines of the surface winds are depicted with regions of low level convergence. These regions of low level convergence are often associated with strong and relatively persistent convection leading to the development of clusters of cumulonimbus, or thunderstorm clouds. Areas of low level convergence where the southwesterly trades intersect with the northeasterly trade winds are defined to be the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), generally found to vary between 5°S during the Northern Hemisphere winter to 15°N during the summer. Daily updates of maximum sea surface temperatures, average surface temperatures, minimum surface temperatures, daily winds and relative humidity are made available to the project and other interested users.

Graphics of the METEOSAT 7 Infrared (IR) temperature data are also available which display the temperature and spatial extent of cloud tops. The duration of cumulonimbus, or thunderstorm clouds, with cloud top temperatures of 235°K or colder, are used in the CPC algorithm for computation of convective precipitation estimates. The duration of warmer clouds with temperatures ranging from 235-275°K is used for computation of the orographic precipitation. From these graphics one can infer regions over which strong convection is occurring, and precipitation is falling. (Note however, that not all cold cloud tops are associated with precipitation which reaches the surface of the earth.) Animations of these graphics are available to the project and others in **24-hr** and 10-day loops.

Infrared cloud top temperature data obtained from the European Space Agency (ESA) geostationary METEOSAT 7 satellite positioned over Africa is the primary data utilized in preparation of the precipitation estimates. Surface observations of precipitation obtained from the GTS are the secondary data type utilized in the scheme. GDAS analyses of the wind and relative humidity are used in the determination of regions where orographic precipitation is likely.

Initially, an estimate of the precipitation from convective clouds is obtained from the cold cloud duration utilizing the METEOSAT 5 IR data. The CPC algorithm processes the cold cloud

duration in a similar fashion to the GPI algorithm which assumes a linear relationship between precipitation and cold cloud duration (here cold is defined to be 235°K or lower) This preliminary estimate is then refined with the use of a bias removal which gives full weight to the GTS ram gauge reports This refined estimate is then augmented with the estimate of orographic precipitation from relatively warm sources, producing the final 10-day accumulated precipitation estimate

Estimates of the accumulated precipitation for the African continent are made for 10-day periods, where the first period of the month ranges from day 1 to 10, the second from day 11 to 20, and the third period extends from day 21 to the end of the month Two versions of the African Precipitation Estimates are archived, one version with 8 bit format suitable for use on a personal computer, and the other, a version with 16 bit format for use on workstations or computers with the UNIX operating system

The data archived by the USGS at the EROS Data Center is in 8 bit format, and instructions for access are available through the African Data Dissemination service at their Rainfall Estimate Data Archive Appropriate software to allow the user to display and analyze this version of the data, WinDisp can be accessed directly through the Internet or via mail The CPC Data Archive provides the estimates in 16 bit format

NOAA maintains the following datasets and images which are available to FEWS staff, African meteorological centers and other interested users

- ENSO Advisory
- Typical ENSO Impacts
- Climate Diagnostics Bulletin
- Global Climate Bulletin
- Weekly Global Climate Highlights
- 10-day station data
- 10-day weather summaries
- Monthly station data
- Meteosat precipitation estimates by the CPC/USGS/FEWS/USAID Project
- Monthly meteorology
- Seasonal mean and anomaly rainfall maps
- Seasonal rainfall outlooks
- Global weekly sea surface temperature (SST)

3 National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Aside from the standardized formatting inputs described above, NASA provides the project with important data regarding Normalized Difference Vegetative Index (NDVI) which has been used (with varying degrees of success) to attempt to measure the growth, density and health of crops and pasturelands in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa The NDVI is a measure of the amount and vigor of vegetation at the surface The magnitude of NDVI is related to the level of photosynthetic activity in the observed vegetation In general, higher values of NDVI indicate

greater vigor and amounts of vegetation. The NDVI is derived from data collected by NOAA satellites, and processed by the Global Inventory Monitoring and Modeling Studies (GIMMS) at NASA. The spatial resolution of the NDVI data is approximately 76km. Vegetation indices derived from the NOAA Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer (AVHRR) sensor have been employed for both qualitative and quantitative studies.

The NOAA-AVHRR sensor was designed to collect meteorological data around the world. The potential of the AVHRR for vegetation monitoring was realized after the satellite became operational (NOAA-7 was launched in 1981). However, the design of the sensor for meteorological applications has resulted in shortcomings for vegetation monitoring, such as limitations in accurately determining satellite orbit, the method of onboard data re-sampling, a lack of onboard calibration to correct for decreasing sensitivity of the AVHRR over time, and the selection of an early afternoon crossing time, which generally coincides with the time of maximum cloud development around the world.

The AVHRR collects data at 1.1 km resolution at the satellite sub-point. To reduce the amount of data stored onboard between ground transmissions, data are re-sampled to global area coverage (GAC) resolution. This is accomplished by averaging the four left-most pixels of the first row of a 5*3 pixel window, resulting in nominal 4 km resolution. Since only 4/15 of the original window is used, a locale may be inaccurately represented by a GAC pixel, especially in areas with high spatial variability in vegetation cover.

NOAA provides preflight calibrations for the visible and near-infrared channels, which relates the signal received by the satellite to a pre-launch standard. The preflight calibration does not consider degradation of the AVHRR that occurs after the launch of the satellite. Sensor degradation results in gradual changes in NDVI over the lifetime of the sensor, and leads to discontinuities between successive instruments. The deviations are dependent on the magnitude of NDVI and are generally between -0.10 and +0.01 NDVI compared to the pre-launch standard.

In sum, the three USG partners in the FEWS effort – USGS, NOAA and NASA – have been vital elements in the overall success of the project thus far, particularly in increasing the utility of remotely sensed data, helping improve FEWS' proprietary software packages and in storing and making available to all users a mountain of useful food security-related data sets.

Annex D Names of Persons Interviewed

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Where located</u>
Sahel		
Chad		
Alkhalil Adoum	Assistant Field Representative	FEWS
Moussa Agrey	Consultant	Food Security and Rapid Alert Information System (SISSAR)
Hassanty Chaib	Director General	Ministry of Agriculture
Mamo Desta	Country Director	World Food Program
Ali Adoum Djorou	Director	Promotion of Agricultural Products and Food Security Directorate (DPPASA)
David C. Halsted	Ambassador	U.S. Embassy
Mahamat Ali Hassan	Program Chief	FAO
Laoukoura Kaguou	Division Chief	Agricultural Stat. Div
Mme Khadija	Technician	Lake Development Society (SODEIAC)
Helen La Lime	Deputy Chief of Mission	U.S. Embassy
Mugabe Lotard	Coordinator	DIAPER
Les McBride	Democracy and Development Programs Administrator	U.S. Embassy
Abdalla Bakri Meftuh	Acting Director	Africare
Goua Ndoudansou Ndol	Program Manager	Oxfam
Betoloum Neasmiangodo	Director	Water Resource and Meteorology Directorate (DREM)
Docteur Paul	Director	Market Information System (SIM)
Manuel Sanchez	Mission Chief	Action Against Hunger
Djime Solomon	Office Coordinator	World Vision
Mali		
Kasser Badaoui	Country Director	World Food Program
Roger Bloom	Team Leader	Sustainable Economic Growth Team USAID
Bandiougou Camara	SAP Working Group Participant	National Directorate for Rural Assistance/Agric (DNAMR)
Cheick Abba Cisse	SAP Working Group Participant	CILSS Contact
Cheick Hamala Coulibaly	SAP Working Group Participant	ACORD
M. Coulibaly	Program Officer	Early Warning System (SAP)
Mahamane Coulibaly	Agricultural Division Chief	National Meteorology Directorate (DMN)
Nouhoum Coulibaly	SAP Working Group Participant	Cereals Marketing Restructuring Program (PRMC)
Zima Jean Daillo	Statistician Data Manager	Durable Human Development Observatory
Arnadou Dao	Director	Durable Human Development Observatory

Dauda Diarra	Chief of Research Development	National Meteorology Directorate (DNM)
Kadidia Diarra	SAP Working Group Participant	National Directorate for Rural Equipment & Livestock (DNAER)
Salif Diarra	SAP Working Group Participant	Crop Prot. Division (DPRPAV/NDAMR)
Salif B. Diarra	SAP Working Group Participant	Market Information System (SIM/OPAM)
Diakalidia Doucoure	SAP Working Group Participant	National Social Affairs Directorate (DNAS)
Mahady M. Fofana	SAP Working Group Participant	DIAPER/CILSS
Abdoulaye Hatalaya	SAP Working Group Participant	Save the Children (UK)
James A. Hradsky	Mission Director	USAID/Mali
Modibo Kamate	SAP Working Group Participant	National Statistics and Data Processing Directorate (DNSI)
Adama Kane	SAP Working Group Participant	Family Health Division (DSFC)
Hamala Keita	SAP Working Group Participant	NGO Coordination Off GRM (CCA/ONG)
Mama Konate	Assistant Director	National Meteorology Directorate (DNM)
Alphonse Kone	SAP Working Group Participant	Food Security Directorate OPAM/DSA
Clement Kone	SAP Working Group Participant	World Vision
Mamadou Lamine Kone	SAP Working Group Participant	WHO
Dasse Mariko	Project Director	SAP
David Rawson	Ambassador	U.S. Embassy Bamako
Karim Sacko	SAP Working Group Participant	Ministry of Territorial Administration/Security
Joseph Sedgo	FEWS Burkina Faso Field Rep	FEWS
Mme. Sidibe	Program Officer	World Food Program
Salif Sow	Country Representative	FEWS
Kevin Sturr	FEWS West Africa Regional Rep	FEWS
Bill Todd	Director	Save the Children UK
M. Togola	Technical Director	SAP
Oumar Ibrahim Toure	SAP Working Group Participant	Food Distribution Cell (CADB)
Salim Toure	Observations Director	National Meteorology Directorate (DNM)
Tidiana Toure	SAP Working Group Participant	National Hydrology Directorate (DNHE)
Philip Vernon	Program Coordinator	CARE International
Mauritania		
Lois Arian	DCM	U.S. Embassy
Mohamed Fadhel Oeld	Agricultural Economist	Food Security Information and Early Warning System (SISSAR)
Cheikh Saad Bouh		Lutheran World Federation
Arno Coerver	Representative	Doulos Community
Craig Corbin	Administrative Director	European Community
Mr. Dendura	Rural Development Officer	Doulos Community
Mamadou Dia	Director of Health Services	WFP
Jorge Fario Martin	Program Coordinator	U.S. Embassy
Ambassador Foster	Ambassador	WFP
Joseph Kabore	Country Director of Programs	FEWS
Sy Aliou Mamadou	Assistant	Agricultural and Animal Statistics MDRE
Couradould Moukhyar	Division Chief	FEWS
Sy Hamady Samba	AFFR Mauritania	CSA
Sidaty Oui Tar	Assistant Commissioner for Food Security	

Gandega Yelli	Department head Agro-meteorologist	MDRE
Mr Zahraoui	Assistant Project Mgr SISAAR	FAO
Niger		
Shawn Kaye Baker	Regional Director for Africa	Helen Keller Intl
Charles Cecile	Ambassador	U S Embassy
Gilbert Cina	Director	WFP
Anna Maria Comin	Administrative Coordinator	FAO
Joachim Gromotka	Economist E U Tech Assistant	Early Warning and Catastrophe Management System
Tankari Issa	Statistician	Market Information System
Sani Kondo	Program Assistant	USAID/Niger
Moussa Labo	Agro meteorologist GTP Chair	National Meteorological Service
Brian Larson	Assistant Director	CARE International
Mamadou Mairouna	Permanent Secretary	Early Warning and Catastrophe Management System
Aaron G Marshall	Resident Representative	Africare

Greater Horn of Africa

Ethiopia

Herbie Smith	Food for Peace Officer	USAID
Meg Brown	Agric Office Director	USAID
Keith Brown	Mission Director	USAID
William Douglass	Program Officer	USAID
James Borton	Technical Coordinator	UNDP
Wendy Fenton	Food Aid Advisor	CIDA
Douglas Clements	Food Policy Advisor	CIDA
Fikre Nigussie	Head Food Information	CEFIS/CARE
Teshome Erkinah	Head Early Warning Dept	DPPC
Pascal Joannes	Food aid analyst	EC Delegation
Ian Attfield	Mapping Specialist	USAID/BESO Project
John McHarris	Vulnerability Assessment Officer	WFP
Charlie Teller	SERA Project Coordinator	USAID/DPPC

Kenya

Michele McNabb	FEWS Regional Rep GHA	USAID/FEWS
Nancy Mutunga	FEWS Country Rep	USAID/FEWS
Dennis Weller	Chief Agr and Business	USAID Enterprise Off
Greg Gottlieb	Disaster Response Officer	USAID
Dennis McCarthy	Chief Ag & Nat Resources	USAID/REDSO
Linda Howey	Coordinator GHAI	USAID/REDSO
Larry Meserve	Chief Food Security & Humanitarian Affairs	USAID/REDSO
Donald Mackenzie	Director	USAID/REDSO
Henry Schmick	Agricultural Attache	US Embassy/USDA
Evans Onsongo	Agricultural Specialist	US Embassy
Mohamed Elmi	Deputy Country Rep	OXFAM
Mahboob Maalim	Deputy Natl Drought Coordinator	Office of the President
Janet Angaleyi	Drought Officer	Office of the President
Joseph Kimani	Team Leader	Regional Drought Monitoring Center
Joseph Njirha	Deputy Director	Kenya Meteorological Services
Daniel Gustafson	Country Director	FAO
James Odour	Early Warning Unit	Ministry of Agriculture
Michael Sachett	Country Director & Regional Mgr	WFP
David Fletcher	Deputy Country Director	WFP
Adrian Sharp	Food Security Advisor	WFP/SCF

Marian Read Marinus Gotink Moses Mukolwe	Regional Program Advisor Health and Nutr. Officer Trading Floor Director	WFP UNICEF Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange
Rwanda		
Serge Rwamasirabo Timothy R. Shortley David W. Hess Jean-Francois Gascon Bouchan Hadj Chikh Celestin Kabanda Alain Houyoux Ellen Mathys	AFFR for Rwanda Food For Peace Officer FAO Emergency Coordinator Deputy Country Director Head of Planning Studies Food Security Project Officer Team Leader Food Economy Assessment Unit Project Manager	FEWS Project USAID/Rwanda USAID/Rwanda FAO/Rwanda WFP/Rwanda Min. of Agriculture European Union SAVE (UK)
Kayijamahe Athanase		Catholic Relief Services UNICEF
Daniel Verna	Project Officer Nutrition	
Somalia		
Philip Steffen Abdulkadir Shirwa Sidow Addou John Bierke Ted Anderews Mohamed Ali Farah Erminio Sacco Daniel Gustafson Jean-Ludovic Metenier	CFFR FEWS Somalia AFFR FEWS-Somalia AFFR FEWS Somalia Director Somalia Watcher Consultant Project Coordinator Representative Project Officer	USAID/FEWS USAID/FEWS USAID/FEWS USAID-Somalia US Embassy WFP/IFSAU WFP/IFSAU FAO/Somalia UNICEF-Somalia
So Sudan		
Nick Maunder Janet Omoro Michael A. Sackett David Fletcher	Regional Field Rep S. Sudan Field Representative S. Sudan Regional Manager Horn of Africa Deputy Coordinator Operation Lifeline Sudan	FEWS FEWS WFP WFP
Adrian (Buzz) Sharp Marian Read Dr. Linda K. Ethangatta Jesus Cespedes Luka Biong Deng	Food Economy Analysis Unit Mgr Regional Program Advisor Health Nutritionist Database and Monitoring Officer	WFP WFP UNICEF OLS UNICEF OLS Sudan Relief and Rehab Assn
Berhe Tewelde Berhan Lawrence Otika Joseph Tom Remington	Head Emergency Response Dept Resettlement Officer Agriculture & Environment	CRS/Sudan CRS/Sudan CRS/East Africa
Tanzania		
Vedasto Rutachokozibwa	FEWS AFFR	USAID/FEWS
James Dempsey Kristos Minja Joe Strauss Daniel Kajumulo Mike Mboya Raoul Balletto Ranieri Sabatucci Justin Kabymela George Mwakandyali	Deputy Director Training Specialist GHA Coordinator Director FSD Agro-meteorologist VAM Regional Officer First Secretary Program Officer Acting Director Contingency and Civic Affairs Project Officer Country Program Director	USAID/Tanzania USAID/Tanzania USAID/Tanzania Min of Agriculture Min of Agriculture WFP EU Delegation FAO Prime Minister's Office
Aberra Bekele Malcolm Ridout		UNICEF SCF

Uganda

W Robert (Rob) Rose	Regional Field Rep	FEWS
Andrew K J Mutengu	Associate Field Rep	FEWS
Ron Stryker	SO1 Team Leader	USAID
Greg Farino	Food for Peace Officer	USAID
David Mutazindwa	FEWS Project Officer	USAID
H Masembe Kejubi	Senior Statistician Commission for Agricultural Planning	MOA
Desire Lubega	Documentalist NEWFIS	MOA
Florence Nanyumba	Nutrition Officer	MOA
Apollo Lawako	Asst Program Coordinator	WFP
Bwango Apuuli	Meteorology Commissioner	WMO Rep
Phillip M Gwage	Asst Commissioner Applied Meteorology & Data Processing	GOU
Milton M Waiswa	Agro meteorologist	GOU
E Wachemba	Sr Marketing Officer Market News Service	Min of Trade & Industry (MTI)
Jane Abago	Data Entrant/Analyst	MTI
Stefano Pizzi	Senior Program Officer	AVSI (Italian NGO)
Bernie Runnebaum	Program Manager, PL480 Title II Program – Monetization	ACDINOCA
Scott C McNiven	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer	ACDINOCA
Clive Drew	Chief of Party	IDEA Project
Mark Wood	Field Crops Prod & Mkting Advisor	IDEA Project

Southern Africa

Malawi

Sam Chimwaza	Country FEWS Field Rep	FEWS
Evanace Chapasuka	Assistant FEWS Field Rep	FEWS
Kiert Toh	Mission Director	USAID
Jim Dunn	Supervisor Agricultural Development Officer	USAID
Rob Luneburg	Agricultural Development Officer	USAID
R H Mapemba	Assistant Chief Economist	Ministry of Forestry
Tom Carr	Associate Director	Smallholder Agribusiness Dev Proj
Ronald S Ngwira	Information Analyst	Smallholder Agribusiness Dev Proj
Tamanda L Chidzanja	Field Coordinator	Smallholder Agribusiness Dev Proj
Patricia Zimpita	Head Principal Analyst	Poverty Monitoring Sys Nat'l Economic Council
Kelvin Banda	Economist	Ministry of Finance Food Security Unit Nat'l Economic Council
Felix M Bamezon	Country Director	Ministry of Finance
Paul Jere	VAM Officer	WFP
John P Snell	Administrative Officer	WFP
Charles Mandala	Head of Field Operations	FAO
Edson L Musopole	Project Coordinator	Malawi Social Action Fund
E J R Hazelden	Regional Seed Manager	Action AID National Seed (Cargill Hybrid Seeds)
Susanne Wise	Program Coordinator	UNICEF
Lilian Selenje	Project Officer Care and Nutrition	UNICEF
Chimwemwe Nyimba	Assistant Project Officer Water Environment and Sanitation	UNICEF
Scot Simons	Policy Advisor	Ministry of Agriculture
Stephen Carr	Agronomic Advisor	World Bank
Ian N Kumwenda	Acting Controller of Agricultural Planning Services	Ministry of Agriculture

Mozambique

Joao Manja	Assistant FEWS Field Rep	FEWS
Cynthia Rozell	Mission Director	USAID
Richard D. Newberg	Chief, Office of Agriculture and Food Resources	USAID
Kurt A. Rocheman	Project Development Officer	USAID
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Marina Pancas	Acting Head, National Directorate of Agriculture	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Joanna Madime	Head, National Early Warning Unit	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Iolanda Fortes	National Budget Director, National Planning Commission	Ministry of Finance and Planning
Isabella Gerster	Project Director	MozamAid Program (CRS)
Ana Maria Ribeiro	Economist, Food Security Unit	European Commission
Gumercindo Langa	National Deputy Director	Department to Prevent and Combat National Disasters
Joao Zamissa	Head, Plans and Projects	Department to Prevent and Combat National Disasters
Jean Francois Detry	Coordinator	Doctors Without Borders (MSF)
Maria Adela Castro	Agricultural Economist	Doctors Without Borders (MSF)
Vitoria Ginga	Head, Department of Population and Social Development	National Planning Commission, MFP
Iain McDonald	FAO Food Security Advisor	National Planning Commission, MFP
Margaret McEwan	Nutrition/Socio-Economist Advisor	Poverty Alleviation Unit, National Planning Commission, MFP
David Tchirley	Advisor, MSU Food Security Project	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
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Ballard Zulu	Assistant FEWS Field Rep	FEWS
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David Soroko	Agricultural Development Officer	USAID
Frank Van Dixon	First Secretary	Embassy of the Netherlands
Joyce Kanyangwa Luma	National Project Manager	FHANIS, Ministry of Planning
David Kasonso	Nutritionist	FHANIS, Ministry of Planning
Freda Luhila	Director	Program Against Malnutrition (PAM)
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Denck Sikornbe	Senior System Analyst	National Early Warning System (NEWS)
Priscilla N. Likwasi	Acting Executive Director	National Food and Nutrition Commission
Bai K. M. Bojang	Advisor/Deputy Country Director	WFP
Billy Mwiinga	VAM Officer	WFP
Ken Rice	Managing Director	OMINA Fertilizer
Morris Jangula	Small Scale Fertilizer Sales Director	OMINA Fertilizer
Jan Joost Nyhoff	Marketing Advisor	Food Reserve Agency
Alex Mwanakasale	Agricultural Operations Officer	The World Bank
	Zambia Resident Mission	

Zimbabwe

Gary Eilerts	Regional FEWS Field Rep	FEWS
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Bill Martin	Program Officer	USAID
Eric Loken	General Development Officer	USAID
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Reggie Mugwara	Sector Coordinator Agriculture Food and Natural Resources	SADC
Kennedy Masamvu	Project Coordinator Regional Remote Center	SADC
Graham Farmer	Chief Technical Advisor Regional Remote Sensing Center	SADC
Phumsile Mdladla	Senior Agricultural Economist Regional Early Warning Unit	SADC
Graham Eele	Senior Advisor on Training and Institutional Development	Oxford Policy Management
Brad Garanganga	SADC Coordinator	Regional Remote Sensing Center
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		Regional Remote Sensing Center
Leonard Unganai	Meteorologist	FAO
Mark A Smulders	Cooperation and Food Security Office Sub Regional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa	
Mike Mispellar	Director	CARE
Shombi Sharp	Strategic Planning Consultant	CARE
Godfrey Magaramombe	Coordinator	Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe
Vicki Hill	Advisor	Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe
Liz Lukasavick	Regional Officer	OFDA

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FEWS

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Katie Kampmann	Agricultural Economist	FEWSMT
Vikki French	Agro Climatologist	FEWSMT
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Peter Hobby	Information and Communications Specialist	FEWSNV
David Elwell	Editor and Reports Specialist	FEWS/W
Sean Kish	Data Management/GIS Specialist	FEWSNV
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Mark McGuire	REDSO Contract/FEWS Consultant	FEWSMT
Henri Josserand	Senior Associate	ARD

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Jim Verdin	International Programs Director EROS Data Center	USGS

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Rafaello Marsilli	FAO
Andrew Nadeau	FAO
David Phiri	FAO
Rachel Bedouin	FAO
Pablo Ricalde	WFP
Kees Tuinenburg	WFP

Annex E Time Table for FEWS *Bulletin*

Task	Timeframe	Description
Receipt of Monthly Report	COB fourth working day of the month	Latest date for Monthly Reports from the field includes text and graphical material
<i>Bulletin</i> planning		Discuss topics with RCs assign priorities and word counts for articles
Regional Coordinator field input review revision and clearance of <i>Bulletin</i> articles	Five days COB tenth working day	Monthly reports tailored for <i>Bulletin</i> use by RCs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RC revisions FEWS/W and FFR review • Draft graphics circulated with text • Production of key graphics begins
Editing	Three days COB thirteenth working day	Cleared text reviewed and revised for style grammar and punctuation Remaining substance and content questions resolved with RCs and field staff Graphics production finished incorporating cleared revisions from RCs and field staff
Layout	One day COB fourteenth working day	Final text and graphics inserted in final <i>Bulletin</i> format mock-up provided by end of day
Review and delivery to printer	One day COB fifteenth working day	Grievous error check Mock up reviewed changes made/cleared <i>Bulletin</i> sent to printer
WWW Publishing – English	One day COB sixteenth working day	Text/graphics converted to WWW formats page layout for hypertext completed concurrent with printing
Printing	Four days COB twentieth working day	Output <i>Bulletin</i> to film strip in negatives print/approve color proof print four color offset dry cut fold and mail final <i>Bulletin</i>
French translation and printing	Eleven days (five days off site translation one day for FEWS/W review/editing one day for layout/translation of graphics, four days for printing)	Paper copy sent to translator on the fifteenth working day of the month Translation returned on disk FEWS review layout printer outputs final copy and mails
WWW Publishing – French	One day	Text/graphics converted to WWW formats page layout with hypertext completed concurrent with printing

Annex F Evaluation Team Composition

The Evaluation Team was comprised of

Douglas Brown

Expert in natural resources management, database management, GIS mapping and computer technology Seventeen years of overseas experience

David Eding

More than 20 years of experience in institutional development, financial planning, project management and evaluation More than 20 years of overseas experience

Bill Guyton

Expert in agricultural economics, trade and food marketing Twelve years of international development experience

Shubh Kumar Range

Formerly with IFPRI, an expert in international nutrition, agriculture and food economics Many years of international development experience in numerous capacities

Barry Riley

Team leader Formerly with USAID for 22 years and the World Bank for 5 years Expert in food security issues in Africa Eighteen years of overseas experience

Ian Stewart

An expert in agro-climatology and international agricultural research and development President of World Hunger Alleviation through Response Farming (WHARF) Many years of overseas experience